

SHOTOKAN RYU KASE HA INSTRUCTORS ACADEMY

SRKHIA Newsletter 9/05

Dear karateka,

As another summer goes by, taking the holiday season with it, a new activity, training, practice circle starts for each of us and our Academy as well. For each one of us, I think, everything is clear in the way ahead for the practice of our art. There is a clear way, shown to us by Kase sensei. SRKHIA unites us in a common effort but still remains an individual's responsibility to walk its own way towards the common goal. Please be reminded of that

Coaching and Training Principles

by Fedyk Michaylo 6dan, Shihankai member

Hello Once Again,

This file is the continuation of the 3rd of 8 chapters of varying topics that are essential to the successful outcome of the Periodization Training Programme in mind. Please remember there are seven sections within this chapter that will be further expanded on over the next two or three editions of the newsletter. (Editorial space dictates) The last article covered Strength Conditioning today's article covers Flexibility Conditioning.

3.4: Flexibility Conditioning

3.4.1: Rationale

"Flexibility can considerably enhance sporting performance if a systematic approach to training is applied". (Paish 1998)

"Range of movement or joint mobility is a pre requisite to performing skills with high amplitude and increases the ease with which the athlete can perform the movements". (Bompa 1999)

An inadequate development of flexibility may lead to various deficiencies as suggested by Pechtl (1982) cited by Bompa (1999).

- Learning or perfecting movements is impaired.
- The athlete is injury prone.
- The development of strength, speed and co-ordination are adversely affected.
- The qualitative performance of movement is limited. When an individual has a flexibility reserve, he or she can perform skills more rapidly, energetically, easily and expressively.

A programme of flexibility development and maintenance stretching is essential if the above negative factors are to be avoided.

Martial artists do require a high ROM in many joints especially in the performance of **Kata and Kumite** skill applications were a combination of static and dynamic flexibility is essential.

The conditioning phase of flexibility development will incorporate training methods based on **static stretching, active stretching** and to some extent **dynamic stretching** actions applied during skill application.

At a later stage of the programme as adaptation to training takes place PNF (Proprioceptor neuromuscular facilitation) passive stretching will be employed.

3.4.2: Static Stretching:

The longitudinal tissue change created by static stretching remains after the stretching force stops. After a prolonged period of stretching the muscle will yield to further stretching without damage. Muscle resistance both deliberate and reflex must be stopped for optimal results. (NCF 1996)

Two different goals can be achieved by static stretching.

- Stretching immediately after the warm up, joint flexibility can be increased.
- Stretching immediately after the session finishes muscles that are fatigued, tight and cramped because of the work overload may be restored to their original length. Muscle regeneration only takes place in a state of relaxation.

Static Stretching Method:

This method of stretching is perhaps the simplest form.

The stretch relaxation method:

The stretched position must be made as a slow movement to the furthest point and held in stretched position for 5 to 25 seconds and then relaxed for approximately 20 seconds prior to a second stretch to point of discomfort. Slow and uniform (natural) breathing throughout the stretch exercise should take place. (NCF 1996 & Alter 1998)

This method is generally applied as a maintenance routine.

The number of repetitions per stretch exercise is a debatable topic with a variation of theory regarding the most beneficial amount.

As time is paramount and through personal training experience two repetitions per exercise will be initiated at this stage of the training programme.

An important point to take on board is the fact that the static exercises are aimed at improving general flexibility / ROM and not specific karate movements.

3.4.3: Active Stretching:

Active flexibility requires the athlete to contract a muscle or group of muscles about a joint placing other muscles under stretch. (Paish 1998) This enables stretching to be initiated as a more sport specific action and a strengthening of the agonist muscles for the specific skill applications will be achieved. This form of stretching is a good preparation for the application of skills performed as a ballistic action. In many of the stretch hold positions specific to karate the strength required from the agonist muscle groups may be insufficient and will require further development. Partner assistance i.e. light spotting of held stretch position is acceptable if this is the case.

Active Stretching Method:

Preparatory static stretching will precede the active stretching routines.

The active stretching will be based on replication of karate skills primarily kicking techniques that will be performed as a slow movement to full extension point at an

angle appropriate to the athletes ROM for the particular skill. The extended leg must be held in position for as long as possible, this will help develop the agonist muscle groups and as progression is made time extension and ROM will be increased.

This type of stretching will form an excellent preparation phase prior to any ballistic type actions occurring in a kicking skills session.

3.4.5: Dynamic / Ballistic Stretching:

The skill specific dynamic action required is the main advantage of this type of stretching.

The procedure initiates three major areas of concern:

- **Tissue adaptation.** When muscles and supporting connective tissue is rapidly stretched they are not given adequate time to adapt.
- **Soreness & Injury** - Strains and muscle ruptures are likely and may lead to a much-reduced ROM.
- **Initiation of the Stretch Reflex** - A sudden stretch initiates a reflex action causing the muscle to contract, as a result muscular tension increases, making any stretching of muscle tissue more difficult. A muscle must be relaxed to initiate any stretch benefit.

Due to the nature of these risks, a specific routine of ballistic training will not form part of the training. As dynamic actions are required in the application of skill across the three disciplines of karate the ability to perform such actions without fear of injury must be overcome both physiologically and psychologically.

Ballistic Stretching Method:

This will be achieved via the normal practice of techniques applied across the three disciplines e.g. Rapid fire striking or kicking techniques to specified target areas.

These techniques will be practised to target areas that equate to or go beyond the ROM established in the static and active stretching.

3.4.5: Training Schedule Weeks 1 - 6

The static stretching routines will formulate a strong base of the training routine and should be completed in line with the three strength-conditioning sessions per week, these exercises will provide an overall development. The active stretching will be practised as part of the normal training routine during the karate skill specific sessions of two to three times per week and will be concentrated on kicking development. This will also help to develop strength of the specific agonist muscle groups, which in turn will help to develop the stability required from the base supporting leg.

Samples of the static stretching exercises that can be used may be viewed in the book titled: ***Stretching Exercises for Everyday Fitness*** by Anderson B (1981)

If any reader has a particular question related to any articles published to-date please contact me or forward your query to the editor of the newsletter and I will do my best to give an informative answer.

Budo Themes: Seiza, by S.G. Drossoulakis 4th dan

One of the first things that a karate practitioner, as well as a practitioner in other budo, is introduced is sitting in seiza. Training starts with karateka lined up, sitting in seiza in order to perform the opening ceremony for the training practice. A similar procedure is followed at the end of the training. But what is seiza? And how it has been introduced to our practice procedures?

Seiza is the most commonly used sitting posture in Japanese way of life. Budoka, practitioners of traditional Japanese martial arts, will move into this posture at the beginning and end of their practice. It is also used in other traditional arts, when creating an elaborate flower arrangement in Ikebana, when performing Chanoyu, the art of tea, in performing with the traditional fue, flute, shakuhachi, vertical bamboo flute, koto, stringed harp, as well as when chanting Noh drama music, the chorus all sit in seiza. It is apparent that seiza has a particular position in Japanese life. But how it has come to be like that?

Seiza was and is a posture used in formal occasions in traditional Japanese culture. When performing something significant in an official capacity, the Japanese of old used seiza as a form of social propriety and etiquette. It comes from Ogasawara Ryu School of etiquette and has influenced all aspects of life. It was firstly introduced to the martial arts through kenjutsu schools of swordsmanship. As those were practiced by samurai warrior, who were obliged to follow strict rules of etiquette, these rules introduced in their practice, since they should be able to act and perform from this position. Since every ryu included various ways of fighting, armed and unarmed, the seiza posture introduced in the full spectrum of traditional budo.

In various picture scrolls, from medieval Japan, samurai and nobility are depicted sitting indoors cross-legged, however during the Edo Period (1600-1868), seiza evolved to become the pre-eminent formal sitting posture on tatami mats.

A few words for the Ogasawara-ryu school for etiquette. It was the pre-eminent school of etiquette among the samurai class of the Edo period and continues its tradition up to this day. From the book by Ogasawara Kiyonobu, *Nihon No Reiho*, we may have some understanding of the meaning and method of seiza. Kiyonobu notes how many people complain that seiza makes their feet "go to sleep" (*shibireru*), but he says that it is from lack of proper exercise, weak leg muscles, and poor circulation, and not necessarily due to the contortions of sitting in seiza.

.....If practiced properly, one should be able to do seiza for several minutes to an hour or so a day with no discomfort. Proper seiza, Kiyonobu says, helps to naturally align your body and spinal column, and leads to an alert mind and body (1):

. . .Even if you sit in seiza only to eat your meal, that's fine. . . By doing so, you will create a peaceful feeling and your body posture will become properly aligned. (2)

Seiza, in Japanese, is written with two kanji characters. The first character pronounced *sei-* means "proper, right, true". The second character *-za* means "sitting posture". For the Japanese aesthetic, sitting in seiza on tatami mats indoors is the most efficient, beautiful, and "proper" posture when engaged in a formal activity.

Sitting in seiza, although similar, is not standardized among different martial arts disciplines and schools, ryu. Karate practitioners go in seiza from a shizen tai posture; bent both knees while spreading them apart (some step back with left foot first), keeping the back straight and hands with open palms on the thighs. Put first left knee on the floor and then right knee. At this moment you are in a transitory position, named kiza, with the shins folded under the body, body erect, back straight, hands on the thighs heels side by side feet in vertical position and toes flat. Without stopping in this position, put the instep of the feet flat on the floor, with the big toes side by side (some school put the right toe over the left toe).

In order to rise from seiza, first come into kiza position, always as a transitory phase and put right foot beside left knee, before continuing to rise and assume a standing posture. Going to or standing up from seiza should be in a calm and elegant way, without any awkward or jerky movements. You should sit in seiza like the morning dew sits on leaves and flowers, and rise as the smoke in a lack of wind.

As it was said there are slight variations, among the various martial arts ryu as well as in other arts, geido, in how to take seiza position; how to sit or how to rise. Everyone has to follow the particularities of his school. Particular attention should be given if you try to sit in seiza wearing hakama. If you don't do it properly you end up in a messy situation. Martial artists, bugeisha, use a slight movement with the right hand to spread hakama folds between knees, hakama sabaki, while many times left foot steps back at kneeling.

It should be understood that seiza although a calm posture allows quick movement in every direction, whether it be to serve the needs of a lord, to make a bowl of tea, to quickly rise up and draw out one's sword or to perform defence in an attack. Koryu schools emphasized this practice as well as aikido does. In old karate books, like "Karatedo Kyohan" by Funakoshi Gichin, you may find such training exercises. Ogasawara Kiyonobu describes seiza as a posture of "potential movement within stillness", opposed to the Buddhist sitting posture of full lotus or half-lotus -"stillness within stillness"-, used purely and simply for meditation. (3). As that seiza was the perfect posture for the active samurai and his today retainers.

In conclusion, seiza is a formal sitting posture, stemming from medieval Japan, used not only in Japanese budo but in every other Japanese tradition, ryu. It is well-defined with codified ways of stepping in and out of it, although different classical traditions have slight variations. You must always follow what your school or ryu dictates.

Anyway next time you move into seiza, you should do it with a better understanding of your action.

Footnotes:

(1) Page 33, Ogasawara Kiyonobu, **Nihon No Reiho**, Kodansha, Tokyo, Japan, 1976.

(2) Ibid, page 34.

(3) Ibid,Page 86.

Grading Syllabus

The grading Syllabus of the Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Instructors Academy has been completed to include requirements of grading for yondan and above. The completed syllabus has been approved by the Shihankai. It can be found and downloaded in <http://www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.de/english/academyinfos/grading/index.htm> .

I would like to point out that, Shodan to Sandan grading requires the presence of one Shihankai member or another specially authorized -by the Shihankai- instructor, Yondan grading requires the presence of two of the aforementioned, while Godan and above grading will be conducted only during Academy's annual Gashuku, by the Shihankai members.

SRKHIA News

Reports

SRKH Israel Annual Seminar.

The annual seminar of SRKH Israel took place from 29 July to 1 August in Nahariya, where the headquarters of SRKH Israel is located. Lecourt Pascal sensei, 5 dan, was the guest instructor, together with Farkash Arie sensei, 6 dan.

First day started with with open hand techniques hente and seite, fudodachi training and elevation of the spirit. Lecourt sensei went really into details and provided participants with a lot of information.

Day two was dedicated to Sochin Kata. During the second part participants performed Sochin bunkai. It was very interesting and enlightening. Although kata was not examined thoroughly, participants went very deep with some movement and principles of zanshin, maai and positions of the body.

Day three started with Heian Nidan omote, ura, go etc. Participants were also instructed on some mixed bunkai, with great Ideas how to control the opponents. In the evening training session seminar run through the curriculum of Dan grading. It was a great summery of KSK requirements according to Kase sensei's direction.

Day Four was a real elevation of the spirit. The class was all dedicated to Heian Nidan bunkai, in a very intensive and strong way. It was a great experience. Everything just came out together and it looked good.

It is worthy noted that in the seminar apart from the Israeli members, karateka from Germany, Berlin and France participated as well. All renew their appointment for next year.

International Macabi Games in Israel; Great results for SRKH Israel.

The Israeli Karate Federation held International Macabi Games Competition in mid July in Jerusalem, Israel. SRKH Israel participated in these games, which are conducted every four years, after a ten years absence. SRKH Israel members won four gold medals, Women Team Kata, Women Team Kumite, Women Individual Kumite Open category, with Loris Afarah and Women Individual Kumite 60(-) kg, again with Loris Afarah.

In Women Team Kata the team of SRKH Israel, representing Israel, won the Canadian team in the semi finals, to win the US Team in the finals.

In addition to that Farkash Arie sensei was appointed as a member of the Technical Committee and the Kata coach.

Recommended Courses:

Do you want to stay informed about courses in different countries by any or a particular instructor? 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.

San Pilay, 6 dan, organizes the Kase ha Memorial Seminar on 2, 3 and 4 September 2005 under the direction of Mirce Opeloski sensei, 6 dan and the Championship on 10 September 2005 in Pretoria, South Africa. Championship is open to all ages and levels under different categories. For more information please contact directly the Event Coordinator, Karien Jacobsz at kjacobsz@polka.co.za For those who do not have the possibility to be there, I hope organizers will provide a detailed report of the event.

SRKH is reaching the edges (from a European point of view) of the world, in this case Australia. Farkash Arie sensei, 6th dan, will conduct a series of seminar, organized by Zanshin Shotokan Dojo, in October 2005. Arie sensei will teach from 14-16 October in Sidney, in a three days Gasshuku for the Association's senior members, from 17 – 18 October in Save, Victoria and from 19-20 October in Melbourne. During these seminars all aspects of Kase ha Shotokan ryu Karate do will be taught and explained.

If you want to travel to this corner of the world, please contact Farkash sensei, arie@sskai.com tel (972) 528360555, for more information.

Lecourt Pascal sensei, 5 dan and Shihankai member will teach on 22 and 23 October 2005 in the Zeist, The Netherlands, in a course organized by the Stichting Dokan and Andre Brockbernd. For more information or enrolment contact Stichting Dokan

Secretariat, Nijenheim 2426, NL 3704 VK ZEIST, The Netherlands, Tel: +31 30 6963479, Fax:+31 30 6963479, E-mail: stage@dokan.nl, Website: www.dokan.nl

Heene Dirk sensei, 7 dan and member of the Shihankai, will teach a course on 5th and 6th November 2005, in Cork, Ireland, organized by Olympic Karate Club and Tim Harte sensei. For any information contact Tim Harte at olympickarate@eircom.net or mbl tel ++353 087 6408742, or look <http://homepage.eircom.net/~olympickarate/>

Dimitrijevic Velibor sensei, 6 dan and Shihankai member, will teach in on 27, 28 and 29 January 2006 in Gandia, Valencia, Spain, in a course organized by Frank Schubert. For more information contact Frank Schubert, e-mail: info@kamikazeweb.com

A rather early announcement for advance planners. The Sei Sen Karate Club Arlon organizes the XVIth International Karate training in Arlon Belgium, on 18 and 19 March 2006. Instructors are Dirk Heene, 7 dan and Shihankai member, Francois Van Binst, 6 dan and Pascal Petrella, 5 dan and Shihankai member. For information contact Lallemand André, 70, rue de Toernich, 6700 Arlon, tel/fax/rép 063/22.34.68, e-mail : andre.lallemand@skynet.be

Are you interested in kobujutsu? Dick Fieret, 5 dan, organizes a series of kobujutsu trainings on 25/9, 5/11, 26/11 2005 and on 21/1, 18/2, 25/3, 22/4, 20/5, 24/6. In addition Budo club Fieret organizes its annual Budostage in Terneuzen, the Netherlands, on 11 and 12 December 2005 with guest instructors Dirk Heene, 7 dan and Julian Mead, 6 dan. Are you interested? Contact Enquiries to: Dick & Gertjan Fieret, e-mail: dfieret@zeelandnet.nl, tel: 0031 -115-696383 of 695072.

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.

Last but not least. Do you want information on courses that you organize or teach to reach Academy members? Please inform me timely so I can put them in this Newsletter. I see information on many courses related to the Academy in various sites on the Internet and it's a pity that this information never reached our Newsletter.

Gasshuku 2006

During its last meeting, in June 2005 in Athens GR, the Shihankai had decided the conduct of two Gasshuku every year, one in spring and one in autumn. The venue for the Spring Gasshuku remains open (May or early June period), while the autumn one will take place in England, organized by the English Shotokan Academy. This last one will take place from 29 September to 1 October 2006 in Lilleshal National Sport Center, www.lilleshall.co.uk, the venue where the Annual ESA Residential Course takes place. It is important to make your plans from now because early 2006 your registration for participation will be required, according to operating procedures of the venue. More on this in due time.

Recommended Internet sites

www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.de Pascal Petrella's dojo site on SRKHIA. The site includes many useful Academy information, including SRKHIA Newsletters; www.shotokanryukaseha.com Martin Fernandez's site, includes a lot of information on Kase sensei and SRKHIA as well; www.kamikazeweb.com Frank Schubert's site, with many items for on line shopping and information on courses with various instructors. Every member should have them on his Favorites list.

Does your club, or you, have a site with relevant information you want to share with other members? Send me the information and it will be put in the Newsletter, so all members will be informed.

Quotation of the month

"The important thing in strategy is to suppress the enemy's useful actions but allow his useless actions"

Miyamoto Mushashi, Go Rin no Sho / The Fire Book

The next Newsletter will be edited in the first week in October 2005. Stay strong, train hard and enjoy life.

Oss

Spiros G. Drossoulakis