



Newsletter

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From the President

Richard Bruno

Probably the most valuable asset we can give to others is an education. This is a lifetime experience. How lucky we are to have a teacher as Shehan Foster. As we know, karate is not just a physical art or sport. It is disciplining the mind and applying this to our everyday life. We cannot count all the ideas, advice, and wisdom Shehan has given us. Many of us have been with him for over twenty years and are closer than ever to him. He has influenced us, our families, our professions, and people we will associate with in the future.

The best we can do is to help someone else along in life and carry this positive spirit of our Shehan, for we can never repay him.

A Word From Shehan

Workingout Alone

We martial artists consider our work as a lifetime journey. We are not taking a "crash course". There must be room for a well rounded life - work, worship, study, adventure, etc. I practice other sports and disciplines, and encourage you to do so. All these things make it impossible for us to always be in class. The karate ka must put the art in a central place, never miss a class or a workout if you can attend.

Some of us must be absent for short periods and sometimes for long periods. None of us can be present all the time and still fulfill all our obligations. This is not an excuse to give up.

We have students who work out every day alone, for long periods of time. Some of them live on the west coast, some in the east and others in Europe.

We judge our lone practice and our work with others by the following principles.

1. The principle of balance in body, mind and spirit.
2. Never fight if it can honorably be avoided.
3. Never venture with partial commitment.
4. Never treat others with disrespect.
5. Always leave a person an opening to bow out with dignity.
6. Practice meditation and relaxation often.
7. Have faith and you will develop increasing power of Chi (Ki).

In our Kata, we learn physical principles (and others):

1. The principle of the willow.
2. The principle of the bow.
3. The principle of the "puff of smoke"
4. The principle of power, and others.

Facing "It" alone we may develop character more than when working with our brothers and sisters.

Come to us as often as you can. You are always more than welcome. If I had the money I would visit you wherever you are!

Keep the faith and you will never fail.

(Use the Makawara!!!)

With love,
Sayonara
Shehan Foster

On Being A New Student Of Karate

John T. Nieves

Since taking up karate eight months ago, I've been often asked the question, "How do you like the class so far?" Depending on when the question was asked, the answers have ranged from, "It's alright," to "I like it very much." I have also been asked the question, "Do you think you are going to stick with it?" Again not dissimilar to the previous question's answers, the responses ranged from the apathetic "I don't know." to the animated "Yes, definitely." At first I didn't give much thought to these questions put upon me by the higher ranking members of my class. But when I did, I realized that they were not inquests of self-indulgence, but rather, a test of my own integrity and perseverance as a student of karate.

The first to ask me the question was my sensei (Marc Travanti) after a class - demonstration in which prospective students were invited to attend. Without giving thought to the question, I told him that I liked what I saw and that I didn't foresee any problems in sticking with it. One week later, in the first class I attended as a participant, it took only the warm-ups (which included burpees and knuckle push-ups) to make me realize that karate would require more from me than I had anticipated. In retrospect, I feel that I learned a very important lesson about the integrity of a student of karate. I learned that karate is not something that can be casually pursued on my free time. The choice was then mine to take it seriously and accept the rigor and discipline required by the study of karate, or to drop out and pursue other endeavors.

The decision to pursue karate was not an easy one

to make. In making this decision, I had to come to terms with how much time I was willing to dedicate to it. Will I stick with it? At this very moment, I say yes because I understand what it means to stick with it. Sticking with it means that the karate student is willing to endure and, more importantly, persevere. If that means practicing seiken punches five hundred times or running through tai-gi-gaien ten times in a row, then so be it. I found in these past eight months of study (as I have throughout my life) that the effort put into karate is directly proportional to what I will "learn" from karate. Just "knowing" something about an art is often useless, unfulfilling; and in karate, possibly dangerous. That would be the result a student would achieve whose only effort is showing up for class. However, "learning" something about karate, and practicing what has been taught, brings enlightenment not only for the individual student but also for the rest of the dojo.

Although I am comfortable in my decision to seriously pursue the study of karate, I feel that I need to evaluate the martial arts some more before I can qualify this decision with a sense of permanence. If the day comes that I may have to put aside the study of karate, it will be more than enough consolation to have learned and have bettered from it.

I would like to thank Bob Nelson and Lynn Philyaw for their articles in the May 1989 Newsletter ("A Better Person" and "Some Thoughts on Karate", respectively) which are the inspiration for this piece and my sensei for his encouragement.

A Few Of A Sensei's Challenges

Lynn Philyaw

The rewards and challenges of practicing the arts are great. Great also are the satisfactions and frustrations of teaching, as anyone who has seriously instructed will attest to. I have taught high school for over twenty years and karate for nearly as long, and, of late, I increasingly reflect on my joys and my despairs, my sense of accomplishment and my haunting feelings of inadequacy. Those who are senseis may immediately understand and identify with what I am about to say. Those who are students may want to tuck this away for future reference---for, if you are a serious karate student who gains satisfaction in sharing what you value with others, you may one day find yourself confronting the problems others have had with teaching the art (or teaching almost anything, for that matter). If you choose, instead, to remain a student (and the pursuit of learning is itself a noble calling), then you may be well advised to take stock of your responsibilities in overcoming the following areas of difficulty.

The conditions of childhood and, later, adulthood create stresses that are both complex and intense. If we take these fully into account, we must accept Fritz Perls' generous estimate that over ninety five percent of the population is neurotic. Given the strong possibility that, apart from the traumas of childhood, we have had to learn to adapt to a basically psychotic culture, it's not surprising that all of us who wish to achieve any semblance of genuine balance have an uphill climb. We carry with us the decisions about the world and our parents that we made as children, many of which we never examine and revise thereafter--except as a result of very serious reflection and /or therapy (which many of us are too smug or frightened to undergo).

Added to our private "skew" on reality that is a result of our childhood, socio-economic factors (ethnicity, religion, race, educational level, financial status) contribute further to a twisting of our perspective in ways we're seldom conscious of. Unless we're led to examine them, these influences or "messages" handed down to us are accepted without question. So much of what we think we "know" is outdated, unexamined "junk" that we have naively accepted without genuine choice or examination. (These items include "prejudice," among other basic fear responses.) We are, at this point in my argument, what we have decided we are at the wise old age of about 4-5 and what our environment has "told" us we are or "should" (nasty word) be.

Another well-documented and even more insidious and far-reaching problem exists. This is the very mediated context that we "live" in. Children today are growing up in a technological womb/ matrix that their parents and grandparents never (even in nightmare) dreamed possible. They live in a world where time is measured in "nanoseconds," where information is delivered in "bites" and where everything seems immediately and easily available and "accessible" (a favorite term).

They grow up (or merely outward) in a world in which everything seems possible and their right. They expect and demand immediate reward and easy pay-offs. In short, they watch too much television and believe it.

As if these two factors were not enough of a stumbling block in the way of clear perception, we have the tendency of Twentieth Century man to rely more on the left hemisphere of the brain than on the right. Rather than utilizing intuition, imagination and "feel" along with reason, we tend to restrict ourselves to articulation and order -- to that which can be measured. Rather than see the world as it is, we see it as we decide it "should" be seen. We have a natural tendency to want to control things.

One of the hardest things to teach a karate student is the paradox of releasing a false sense of control in order to gain real control. To accomplish this demands that we shift perceptual modes--from left to right hemispheres of the brain. If we can help our students to make this shift, we can release incredible potential energies and positive directions within them. This, of course, is both easier said than done. However, what makes the arts a life-long challenge for those of the "elect" (and we would all be in this group if we were really in touch with ourselves) is the possibility of *transcendence* -- of achieving or becoming something beyond what those who lead "lives of quiet desperation" (i.e., the majority of people) can achieve.

One of the great benefits that I derive is that I, as a sensei, am constantly trying to reinforce those virtues in myself that we try to activate in others. This is one of the advantages of "teaching" something you want to continue learning. What I mean, in part, is that we're all wonderfully in this great challenge together -- all searching for something in ourselves that the arts helps us find. Let's support each other as well as we can, each realizing the other's limitations and supporting their strengths.

Birthplace of Taijiquan Boxing

Bu Xieming

(From China Reconstructs August 1982)

Chenjiagou, a village in Wenxian county, northwestern Henan province, was the birthplace in the 17th century of the ancient taijiquan boxing exercises in the form in which they are practiced today. They are known by a great many of the villagers - 80% it is said - and taijiquan enthusiasts come from all over the world to do practice with them.

The originator was Chen Wangting, a Ming dynasty general who came there to live in retirement. As a way of keeping fit he developed the movements, possibly with help from monks from Shaolin Monastery where another form of boxing had been created in the 6th century. The Chen Wangting school is the oldest form of taijiquan. It later took on its present name: *taiji* means the origin of everything in the world.

Chenjiagou is a typical north China village of earthen houses behind courtyard walls of rammed yellow earth. But there are many new houses of brick, and a few new two-story homes indicate that families are prospering under the new responsibility system of production in the rural areas.

Boxing School

The village has taijiquan sports school, housed in a building of a dozen rooms in the northeast corner of the village. Wang Xi'an, a noted boxing coach, is its director. His sturdy build and frank and open manner recall the heroes of ancient times. The school has three classes and 90 students, mostly young men and women. Under different coaches, they practice boxing and using the cudgel, sword, broadsword, spear and other weapons. During busy farm seasons they do a few hours in the early morning or after work, while in slack seasons they concentrate on the martial arts the whole day. Originally begun for local residents, the school is supported by the state and will soon also take people from outside the village.

Next to the sports school is the village's primary and junior middle school. Taijiquan is popular among its 700 pupils, many of whom also practice it at home. Their interest comes down with the generations. The father of young Chen Jianping and Chen Genquan, for example, is one of the village's boxing masters. He teaches his children at home and students from nearby villages. He is particularly good at using weapons, his performances featuring sustained movements and a heroic manner.

A Master

Another villager, Chen Xiaowang, a coach in the provincial wushu center, participated in the National Wushu Performance Contests in 1980 and 1981, winning awards for his superb skill.

Chen Xiaowang's grand father was a well known boxer in Beijing when he was young. His father was one of the best boxers in the village. Chen Xiaowang learned his skills from them. Later he asked Chen Zhaopei, whose family had produced famous boxers for 18 generations in his family. Systematic and hard training has made him a master of this

difficult discipline. He not only excels at the traditional style of the Chen school, but is good with the broadsword, spear, sword, cudgel and other weapons. He has taught many students, including some from abroad.

Chen Xiaowang is not satisfied with what he has achieved and wants to teach the *taiji* heritage to the next generation. He once remarked that when he reaches the highest level of taijiquan, he can feel the circulation of vital energy and blood in his body and can make immediate reactions and exert great strength. The key to perfect skill is hard practice.

The strict discipline of taijiquan does not permit anyone to use it to bully people. It is not permitted to be used for attack except in practice or exhibition sessions. Sportsmanship and ethical behavior, rather than military fighting is the goal.

Once taught as a military defense art, taijiquan became less important as new weapons were developed. But it remained popular as an exercise. Those who practice it daily claim that it helps people with chronic diseases such as neurasthenia, hypertension, gastroenteritis, tuberculosis, arthritis, rheumatism and diabetes. It requires physical and mental concentration, leads naturally to deep and even breathing, and is excellent for limbering up muscles and joints. This accelerates the well being of the central nervous system and internal organs. In the old Chinese terminology, it incorporates both the yin and the yang, which includes the concepts of the opposition of motion and inertia, closed and open, abstraction and reality. It is considered a very good form of exercise for old people.

Few people remember that taijiquan was once an ancient war skill, particularly when looking at the gentle, slow motion movements of the version practiced by millions across the country. Later, other schools were developed on the basis of the Chen routines, such as the Yang Luchan, Wu Jianquan, Wu Yuxiang and Sun Lutang schools, resulting in different styles, postures and strength exerted. They are basically similar in hand and foot positions and have some common features such as great control, flexibility, continuity and comprehensiveness.

News From the North

Chuck St. Pierre

In the remote areas of northern Wisconsin, the martial arts are alive and well. There is an association of martial artists called the North Central Black Belt Instructors Association. This association was created over 10 years ago for the purpose of improving our understanding of the art, in all its various forms. This association has well over 1000 members, and is headed up by five individuals from five very different and diverse styles of the martial arts. The association head is Bill Van Auken from Park Falls, a master of Psi-Kai-Do Karate with 35 years of martial arts experience. The other four members heading up this organization are Bill Penca, a master of Fu-Chen Kung Fu, from Rhinelander, with 27 years of experience, Bob Likes, from Wausau, a master in Tai-Kwon-Do, with 32 years in the art, Bruce Prentice, Shoto-Kan Karate, from Ashland, with 20 years in the art, and myself, Chuck St. Pierre, from Green Bay, A student of Shorei-Kempo.

The association participates in tournaments, and summer seminars which feature instruction by all the various styles of the martial arts represented. These seminars normally last for an entire weekend, and normally have two to three hundred participants. The association has very strict guidelines with respect to membership, as it attempts to strengthen the art as it currently exist. There are no "Ninety Day Wonders" in our association. A major goal of the association, and its members are to learn what we can from each other, in our efforts at improvement. We use the analogy that the various styles represent different languages. The goal is not to necessarily change our language, but simply to learn a second, or possibly a third, in our efforts at self improvement.

While association activities slow down during the winter months, they pick up in the spring. Normally, in

April there will be an association membership meeting, where martial arts clubs, and individual Dans desiring entry in the association can join if they desire. In May there is our spring tournament, normally held in Wausau. In July our first weekend seminar is held, normally in Park Falls. In August the second seminar is held, in the Rhinelander area. The summer activities usually wrap up with a fall tournament, held late September, again in the Wausau area.

As the dates of these activities become known, they will be published for everyone in the next newsletter. It goes without saying that all Shorei Kempo Karateka are always welcome to participate in any or our association activities.

Shehan Foster's teaching has allowed me and the other Shorei Kempo instructors to portray our art in its proper form; both beautiful, and deadly. Our style enjoys a fine reputation in Northern Wisconsin. Feel free to visit any of the Shorei Kempo schools in the following areas:

Sensei Bob Nelson	Appleton
Sensei Sharon Olszewski	Wausau
Sensei Andy Tautges	Madison
Sensei Dan Hagengruber	Madison
Sensei Jim St. Pierre	Pulaski
Chuck St. Pierre	Green Bay & Sturgeon Bay

Head Sensei
Yin Yang Do Karate Association (North)
North Central Black Belt Instructors Association

Requirements For Rank

Yellow Belt (Schichikyu)

Basic stances, blocks, punches, strikes and kicks

Kata: Omoto Ten and Karumpha
Geru Wasa 1 and 2, Taisu 1

Green Belt (Rokkyu)

Kata: Shorei Mege, Neko Buto Ich,
Pinan Ich, National Dance, Gaki Sei and
Tai Chi Gedan

Geru Wasa 3 and 4, Taisu 2
Demonstrate open and closed hand breathing
tension wazas.

Blue Belt and Purple Belt (Gokyu and Yonkyu)

Seven Kogeckis

Kata: Neko Buto 2, 3, 4; and 5,
Pinan numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, Saifi, Anaku,
Neko Buto Twelve

Geru Wasa 5,6 and 7, Taisu 3 and 4

Brown Belt (Sankyu, Nikyu, and Ikkyu)

Kata: Basai Dai, Naifunchin, Seenchin
Geru Wasa 8,9 and 10, Taisu 5 and 10

Black Belt (Shodan)

Katas: No Hi, Tensho, Kan Ku Sho, Nandan
Sho

Black Belt (Nidan)

Kata: Go Pei Sho, Sei Pai, Dan Enn Sho