



Newsletter

June 1995

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A Personal Note on Preparing for the Future Shihan Lynn Philyaw

The Past Year

I would like to share some thoughts with you at this juncture in the history of our association. It has been little more than a year now since Shihan Foster left us, and his going is still painful many of us who had relied on him for so long -- not only for his leadership and example in the martial arts but for his role as friend and "parent" to scores of his children. In an important sense however, he has not altogether "left us" -- nor will he -- because he left behind his teachings and his memory as a role model. Also, he left many of us with clear directives, both for our own lives and for the future of the Association he created and valued so highly.

This past year has been a trying one for some of us, a time of challenges and testing -- personal, philosophical and political. Perhaps this was inevitable, though painful and frustrating at times. Trust, however, that it has also been useful and strengthening -- according to the old adage that "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." When I shared some of my feelings with veteran school administrator George Zimmer one night, he said, "This is normal. You sound like just about any principle in a new building his first year!" (Of course, I immediately realized why I had never wanted to go into school administration or politics!) I must also add that I have often thanked God for Cyndee, for her love, support and wise guidance through all of this.

Despite not wanting to go through these trials again, there were many pluses. Always, in pressing times, you discover who your friends are. Many, of course, you've learned to count on because they're proven themselves in the past or you know them to be people of character; but sometimes -- like subtle but sturdy and beautiful mountain flowers you must bow to see -- they come from the most unexpected quarters, as a renewing surprise. I have been more than grateful for the support I have received from members throughout the ranks during this difficult year. I have been especially grateful for the warm reassurances of our board members, the veterans of our Association, several of whom are my peers whom I precede in experience by only a few brief years. This has been particularly significant to me because, in declaring their loyalty, they have embodied the Shihan Foster's teachings in their unquestioned willingness to carry through on his wishes as well as their respect for the traditions of true karatedo. This reflects positively not so much on me as on both the strength of Sensei's teachings and their durability. They are the solid foundation we will build upon! Please pardon this personal note, but, before continuing, I need to share it with you. Those who know me know I have been a bit "over-extended" these past several years -- teaching high school English (with papers to grade on week-ends); teaching my karate class three nights a week; running a

business (Far Eastern Arts); promoting, developing and teaching ACT! (women's personal safety program) trying to find time to do some art work; and, most importantly, making time for a private life (just Cyndee and me). In fact, when it became clear that Sensei had designated me to carry on in his seat, one of the board members, knowing my schedule, wondered how I would find time to perform the duties of director. How right they were to be skeptical. If I'd had more time to give this past year I might have avoided a few conflicts and misunderstandings, made the transition smoother . . . and sooner begun the tasks ahead of us. For this reason -- though Sensei Charles Plaines and I continue to share our warm friendship and mutual respect -- I have divested myself of a major responsibility, my official involvement in Far Eastern Arts. As of May 1, my FEA class joined with the Highland Park dojo under Sensei Bob Tondi, where both he and I share teaching duties, though I will still teach my class at FEA on Friday evening. Teaching only once or, at most, twice per week will unburden both my mind and my schedule so I may more properly devote more time to the responsibilities entrusted me by my sensei. I need you to know that I consider this one of the most important duties I've ever assumed in my life -- because, like many of you, I attribute much of what is best in me to my involvement in karate and my association with the man who brought it to me. I don't know who I would be without that influence. Therefore, I consider it one of my greatest responsibilities to help ensure the passing on of those arts, lessons, disciplines and values we were taught by our Founder.

A Few Proposals for the Near Future

1. One major area we need to work on, all of us, is increased communication -- between individuals as well as schools throughout the association. As a former teacher of communications theory, I know both how critical and how difficult it can be. First is my responsibility to communicate to many of you who do not really know who I am, my ideas on karate and the principles I stand for. I would also need to get to know many of you much better so that we might move forward together. Toward this end, I intend to visit, on a regular basis, as many of our dojos as I can as often as possible.
2. Many of you have also expressed a desire for a standardized system of katas -- so that we can trust that, though variations may be practiced, each kata will possess an agreed-upon set of movements that will be the Association version.
3. We might also systematize the teaching of basic techniques and rules of etiquette within the dojo. (Sensei Al Reingold's excellent article in this issue touches the heart of this, as well as other very important issues.)
4. Establish periodic workshops for our members that

From the President

Dick Bruno

The committee for the review of our constitution has been working on this project for about 6 months. The members were as follows: Al Gomez, Ron Zieth, Dick Bruno and Shihan Philyaw. We will now present the revisions to the board of directors on June 6th, 1995. If the board approves the new constitution we plan to have it printed in our winter newsletter.

Ron Zieth will present a progress report on the taping of the associations kata, wazas, and basic techniques. We hope to uniform our katas and techniques throughout the association in all our schools.

The board will also vote on the permanent position of Shihan Philyaw in July 95. The officers also will be reviewed and possible replacements will be sought by the board of directors if warranted at this time.

Our summer banquet will be on July 29th, at the Danish Brotherhood Hall. Please see our announcement in the newsletter. We changed our date to enable more of our members to attend the Grand Nationals of the USKK in Peoria, IL. I know that Master Koeppel welcomes all of us on July 21, 22, & 23.

I hope to see you on July 29th for our summer seminar and banquet.

Workout Agenda

At Carthage College, Kenosha, WI - See map on page 7.
July 29, 1995

- 1:00 - 1:30 PM General Workout with Shihan Philyaw
- 1:30 - 2:00 PM First Session
- 2:00 - 2:30 PM Second Session
- 2:30 - 3:00 PM Third Session
- 3:00 - 3:30 PM Fourth Session
- 3:30 - 4:00 PM Fifth Session



would encourage more sharing and interaction between schools.

These few, among other, proposals might at least get us started down a very productive road toward increased growth as both karatekas and as an Association. Before moving on to the future, we need now to learn to build a solid foundation on the best of our past and the best in ourselves.



The Old Ways

Al Reingold

The Japanese martial arts are grounded in the samurai tradition of hierarchy, obedience, dedication, and humility. As with assimilation of religion and culture, the departure from the dictates and values of our "parents" (either literal or figurative) increases with each passing year. Therefore, to adhere to the foundations upon which the art we practice are based, it is essential for each subsequent generation to rediscover the value of these traditions, and to commit to them more adamantly than did our predecessors. This is for the sake of our students as well as ourselves and our ancestors. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and it falls to each new generation to ensure that the chain grows stronger. Simple maintenance, i.e. "not slipping", is not enough. Lack of progression is just that if we do not stand on the shoulders of our parents and teachers, the culture/art/society will not grow, but stagnate. To go backward results in the obvious: de-evolution. At his fiftieth anniversary party in 1987, Shihan Foster spoke about the need to strive beyond our teachers; that it was insufficient to try to match our progenitors. Let these words continue to serve as our guide.

It takes little time to adhere to the few points of etiquette taught in the Yin Yang Do. Turning one's back when adjusting one's gi, for example, is an appropriate gesture of respect expected of everyone; therefore, this and similar rituals should be modeled by everyone. Everyone knows what is expected, in terms of etiquette and the like, after only a few short months of training. Adhering to this code takes nothing away from the workout or the practitioner; on the other hand, failure to respect the dojo etiquette results only in apathy, laziness, and a pathetic model for future students. Many, if not all of these customs have been honed and proven over centuries to enhance the humility of the practitioner and the character of the discipline, but it only takes one generation to abandon them permanently. It is not enough to say that certain students embrace this etiquette, and therefore not everyone need do so. The Dojo Etiquette is a Way in its own right, and cannot be divorced from the art we practice, lest that art be robbed of its soul, history, culture, future and tradition. The senseis and students of the Yin Yang Do must work together toward this common goal of creating an association through the commonality of experience of its members. To debase the tradition of the art is to debase ourselves and our colleagues; those of us who have lost faith or belief in the Way of Dojo Etiquette, in our code and our Sensei History, had better find it somewhere. Honor (personal and "associational") and the development of our students and our association is at stake. How we address the art will be noticed and modeled by those who follow us. What we say will be remembered, and retold. We have an incredible nucleus of people; the association is not so large yet that our

faces and ways are unfamiliar. This is a wonderful opportunity to create the model for the future and strength of the association. Many students join the Yin Yang Do because of our traditional ways what a crime to rob them of the beauty of this tradition, which, for many people, is at least as appealing as the physical techniques of the art. True, the samurai studied hand-to-hand combat, swordfighting, archery, strategy, weaponry, and so on, but they also mastered poetry, flower arranging, cha-no-yu, Buddhism, and passive meditation. Their kimonos were immaculate, their weapons sharp and ready, their obedience unquestioned, their punctuality a given, their respect unwavering, their faith absolute, their humility cultivated, and their pride in these attributes was the force that propelled them.

Members of organized religions who have broken ties with their faith (or those who have never known religion) might find themselves feeling adrift, with no ties to the past or to their heritage. Once this is realized, the damage is done and largely irreversible. We have the honor and responsibility of upholding our traditions, complete with the Sensei History and Dojo Etiquette intact, as an unbroken legacy from which future generations can draw strength and pride a legacy worthy of the training we have received.



Karate for Balance

Cyndee Philyaw

One of the best decisions I've made in my life was to engage in the practice of karate. Of course, I really had no idea what that decision would come to mean, or the wealth of benefits I would gain both short and long term.

What I thought I would gain was a) a more interesting work-out than going to the health club b) some useful techniques for self-defense c) an opportunity to be included in something very meaningful to someone who I felt could be very meaningful to my life (my Sensei, who was not yet my husband.)

Well, I did find all of those things... and still benefit from them all, particularly the last one. Beyond this, I don't think there is another endeavor which could have helped me more in my total personal development than a long term study of our art. The key work which comes to mind is BALANCE... in all its aspects.

Physically... I came to Karate with the somewhat common lower back affliction named Scoliosis (curved spine.) I had spent many years going to a Chiropractor for adjustments to ease the resulting neck problems and headaches this condition had caused. Since my study in Karate began (12 years ago), I have never had the need to consult a Chiropractor. I attribute this benefit to the Kibadachi stance, which disciplines one to push the hips forward (and results in a straightening of the lower spine.) The only time my lower back begins to annoy me at all.. is when I miss too many workouts, and it reminds me I need to tighten up!

Emotionally.... to all outside appearances, I have usually appeared to be a person totally in control of my emotional nature (except for those very close who may say otherwise.) However, no one but me knows how much there was going on inside to control. A LOT! I spent so much time in attempting, sometimes desperately, to get and stay in control of the demons within, it didn't leave me much energy to focus on anything else. It was a full-time occupation (or preoccupation), and a very unbalanced condition to operate from. It took about two years of Karate practice before I really started feeling in control of the inner me, without "working at it". Karate gave me the ability to clear my mind completely, to relax, to be open, to accept whatever happens (to accept myself), to work with my strengths and work around my weaknesses. Naturally all of these changes took place over time. Today, I can hardly recognize the person I was inside twelve years ago. I can totally clear my mind, and my emotions, whether inside the dojo or during a tense day at the office. And I now enjoy the freedom to focus my energy on other people or tasks... on the world outside of

myself. (Once you find your Center.. you can stop looking for it.)

Spiritually... I think I relate this area to both people and energy. On the people side, we all know the strong unspoken bond which immediately exists when one meets another student of our style, or, for me, on any other spiritual path. I know we share something... a hunger for personal growth, and a commitment to something beyond the mere material aspects of life. On the energy level, the feeling of energy which one learns to direct and project feels like a direct tap from a universal source; it is both cleansing and empowering. It provides a peacefulness and a source of uncommon power. It puts one in touch with the Yin and Yang of oneself... the ultimate balance.

This is just a brief run-down of one of the ways in which I've benefited from this art. I'm sure I could contribute an article each newsletter and never run out of lessons and gifts which I continue to receive. I truly feel our art is a path which has much to contribute to a great many people, and I'm thankful to be a part of it.



Editors Note:

Thank you to all the authors and people who distribute this newsletter. Once again in order to keep our costs down I will send one copy of the newsletter to each club to reproduce.

The next Newsletter will be out during the month of November. Please have your articles to me no later than November 2, 1995. If possible please type your article. For those of you who have a computer, you can send me your article in Microsoft Word or Word Perfect (no formatting please) and submit on a 3 1/2 disk. I have a Macintosh but can also read IBM disks.

Association Note:

After Erasmus. Al Reingold's new album is now available from Rainy Day Records in Atlanta. Call 1-800-636-6166 or you can email rainy@mindspring.com.

Congratulations Al!

If you have any notes of general interest to the association drop me a line for inclusion in the newsletter. Please send to Al Gomez



Shogun

by James Clavell

Review by Al Reingold

Karma is karma. Be thou of Zen. Remember, in tranquility, that the Absolute, the Tao, is within thee, that no priest or cult or dogma or book or saying or teaching or teacher stands between Thou and It. Know that Good and Evil are irrelevant, I and Thou irrelevant, Inside and Outside irrelevant as are Life and Death. Enter into the Sphere where there is no fear of death nor hope of afterlife, where thou art free of the impediments of life or the needs of salvation. Though art thyself the Tao. Be thou, now, a rock against which the waves of life rush in vain . . . (Book III, Chapter 36)

Although not a "Martial Arts" book per se, Shogun, by James Clavell, paints a riveting picture of Japan circa 1600. This year marked the beginning of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the ruling dynasty which lasted until the Meiji Restoration of Japan in 1868, when Japan finally conceded to open her doors to Western influences. Shogun tells of Pilot-Major John Blackthorne, an Englishman who navigates a sleek trader-warship from Rotterdam during a period of hostilities between Protestant England and Catholic Spain. Blackthorne conns the ship into uncharted waters, searching for the fame and riches to be found in the legendary Far East.

Once the ship runs aground near an eastern peninsula, Blackthorne and his few remaining crew are taken prisoner and their ship confiscated. Without speaking the language or knowing the customs, Blackthorne's experiences provide a perfect window from the Western perspective into the heart of the Japanese culture and civilization. The reader becomes immersed in Blackthorne's ties with the past and all he knows conflicted with the undeniably enlightened (yet still foreign) Way of the Orient. For example, the basic difference of preserving life at all costs versus the Eastern philosophy of karma and the search for "oblivion" plagues Blackthorne time and time again. During his trials and triumphs with this new I and, the reader learns about the Eastern principles of Zen, Japanese culture, and a bit of history through experience rather than by definition.

Through unsurpassable identification with Blackthorne, one experiences with this man, an empty cup, the introduction to the Japanese approach. Not only is this more interesting and retainable than dry encyclopedic knowledge or understanding, the experience of reading Shogun provides a basis for realizing these principles so difficult to grasp for Westerners. It is like the difference between trying to learn a kata objectively, from a book, without practicing it, versus performing the kata again and again; of getting inside the form and becoming inseparable with it.

I read Shogun the first time when I was twelve years old, after watching the mini-series. It was an experience that opened my eyes to something beyond my Western experience, and prompted me to learn more about Japanese history and culture. It is because of Shogun that I began to study the martial arts. I have read it over a dozen times, and find more substance to it with each reading. Nothing has given me a better conceptual understanding of the samurai code of Bushido, an understanding that should be sought after by anyone practicing the Japanese martial arts.

Notes

Much of Shogun is historical. Blackthorne's character is modeled after the pilot Wil Adams, the first Englishman ever to set foot on Japanese soil. Adams did indeed become a Japanese nobleman, and his grave is still marked in Japan.

Shogun is the third of five books in Clavell's "Asian Saga," which consists of:

King Rat	1945
Tai-Pan	1841
Shogun	1600
Noble House	1963
Gai-Jin	1860

All are recommended, preferably in the order above, the order in which they were written.



Giving Time to Karate

Margaret Clark

For as long as I have been in the martial arts, I've had a nagging, low level guilt that I don't give the time to karate that I should. When I was informed that I would be up for promotion to Shodan, I had to face the guilt. I did not feel worthy or ready. It was less a physical readiness than an emotional readiness. I don't deserve this because I haven't committed to this training, not fully.

I have gone to class for thirteen years twice a week I work hard in class. Outside of class I try to live a relatively healthy lifestyle. I walk, I try to eat right. But I have rarely, outside of class, put time into Karate or related exercises. I've wanted to, I've planned to. I will start a routine for a few weeks but never follow through. I live a busy life, other pursuits I have are more important to me. I don't particularly even like talking about the martial arts, an observation here and there, but not long conversations, its boring to me, like football talk.

So faced with these shortcomings, I face Shodan and feel the need to reevaluate my participation in this art. Maybe what I will arrive at is a realization that what time I put in is the right amount of time for me. Or maybe I will see that, as with other pursuits in my life, it is the reluctance to enter completely that keeps me from mastering any of them. Or I will see that a part of the fuel that keeps us learning and practicing an art is that it is so open ended we could never give enough to catch up to all it has to offer.

I look at my printout on "Ranks of Karate" and see that 1st Dan falls roughly in the middle of the ranks. It's not the pinnacle, just another step. But I also notice there's a larger space between Ikkyu and Shodan than between the other belts. This is the space I'm contemplating and wondering what I have to give to get across it.

