

North America



Wado International Karate-Do Federation

DOJO CONNECTION

FEBRUARY 2007



SENSEI DOUG JEPPELSON

Fighting his Sempei Rick Hobusch in the Western States championships... a few years ago.

What Is Karate?

Doug Jepperson, RokuDan

There are currently countless films, magazines and media depictions of marital arts, none of which do any justice to describing the essence of what the real karate practitioner finds in Karate-Do training.

According to the media, Karate is a catchall phrase for "fighting", and very unrealistic fighting at that. The truth is that fighting has limited association with how the Karate-ka (practitioner) regards this art. The dictates of the true way of Karate training require inner balance, compassion, and clarity in all situations. The true martial artist discovers what Musashi said, "I wish to rise above simple strength and speed, I wish to discover true technique."

While great physical prowess is developed and expanded, so are spiritual fortitude, mental focus and a gentle compassionate character. Karate-do means that we are diligent in our quest for optimum performance, inner balance, and positive attitude whether in dojo practice, in our school work, business, families, or communities at large. As Toshio Osaka 8th Dan Wado Ryu, once said, "A truly great martial artist is always a gentleperson." Masafumi Shiomitsu head of European Karate currently trains in a white belt today. A few years ago I met Hisao Murasai, one of the most feared fighters of his day, yet his demeanor was gentle and kind. In his dojo he demonstrated that he had lost little of the skills, which carried him to a world championship, yet, he was self-deprecating and very kind.

The Karate-ka is expected to demonstrate his/her spiritual, mental, and physical strength in the most honorable and productive ways possible, and in every arena possible. Furthermore, he/she is expected to be the advocate of honorable principles whenever the opportunity presents itself.

In other words, Karate-do is not a self-defense method; rather it is a means to awaken in each of us that which is alive. Karate-do is a way of life requiring a conscientious, honorable approach in every detail of our lives. The Zen path is littered with everyday tasks we need to celebrate. If we can discover quality in the most mundane aspects of our life we are discovering "Do."

The essence and test of a true champion in the sport of Karate, requires the ideals of sportsmanship and citizenship at the highest levels. When we speak of contests, I think of the words of Gichin Funakoshi, "It is not important victory or defeat, rather the perfection of the characters in the battle,"

The Karate-ka walks with confidence that is spirited but not over inflated; he/she regards his/her classmates in the same manner as opponents, with respect, not overestimating or underestimating his/her

ability; he/she never neglects the protocol required nor takes the respect given him/her for granted. Our respect for the people we train with is demonstrated in our full commitment to the task at hand.

Do not be misled by the all of the maxims demanding constant practice. Karate-do skills are not developed through mindless repetition, rather through practice with a purpose, which requires our brains. Hironori Otsuka the founder of Wado Ryu, said you must practice habitually but never as though it were only habit.

Albert Einstein said "The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt with awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms, this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness."

This dichotomy between the immaterial mind and the corporeal universe is the pivotal point of martial arts training. We have the intuitive process roots of traditional martial arts from Japan combined with the goal oriented corporeal universe of the West. We need to investigate these boundaries carefully in our quest for understand *do* and why we train.

"True karate-do is this; that in daily life one's mind and body be trained and developed in a spirit of humility; and that in critical times, one be devoted utterly to the cause of justice." Gichin Funakoshi's Karate-do Kyohan.

I leave you with this last quote about the path we are all seeking:

"For me there is only the traveling on paths that have heart, on any path that may have heart. There I travel, and the only worthwhile challenge is to traverse is full length. And there I travel, looking looking, breathlessly. Don Juan, Carlos Castaneda.

Don Juan understood Budo.....

East Coast Wado, Nova Scotia *Joey Shano, Sensei*

Several students passed their recent grading.

Children's Class



L-R: Ryan Black; Brianna Walker; Logan Miller; Colton Smith; Danielle Charette; Jacob Cole; Thomas Hong; Josh Durnford

Adult Class



Patrick Walker; Ross Bowness; Kerry Bowness; Josh Baregar; J.F. Charette; Wendall Durnford; Joey Murley (not pictured)

Our new session has started and we now have 160 members. We believe this makes us the largest Wado Dojo in Canada. We are hoping to expand the club to another part of town. Recently our dojo was asked to be a part of a federally run experiment with water survival suits.

In February we will be having our New Year get together. We will have a night of revelry a la "pool table and cue stick." We will find out who is the best pool player in the dojo.

Ichiban Karate Club, Colorado *Mike Bevins, Sensei*

Ichiban karate Club is opening a second location in Colorado. The first club at the New City of Greeley Fun Plex, has been open for three months and has 15 students with new additions every month. The second club will open on February 5th and will be located across town at the other City of Greeley Recreation Center.

I am also starting a new multi-sport improvement class at the Recreation Center that will work on ply metrics, core strength, and flexibility. This class will be targeted at weekend and professional athletes to improve explosive speed, agility, and strength.

Nechako Karate Club, Canada *Ken Corrigan, Sensei*

I am a little late with this but it appears that the students at the Nechako Karate Club were once again good boys and girls, so Santa Sensei came and gave them a visit. As you can see Santa Sensei has been very busy in his workshop and did not have sufficient time to be training properly.



On behalf of the Nechako Karate Club I would like to wish everyone in WIKF all the best in the New Year. May 2007 is filled with happiness for all the members of our association. I can see by our 2007 calendar of events that we have a great year ahead of us, all we

have to do is reach out and take advantage of these opportunities.

USA Membership Drive

There is still time for all WIKF USA members to renew their membership. This can be done in one of two ways. You need to go to the WIKF USA web page at www.wikfusa.com and click on the link "MEMBERS ONLY." After you open this link you will find "INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM". This will allow you to complete the form and pay on line using Pay Pal.

If you would rather use the "DOWNLOADABLE" form to mail then please note that the fees listed on the form are for new members, not renewable memberships, renewable membership should be \$15 for Adults and \$10 for children. Checks should be made out to WIKF.

In some cases your dojo may take care of your renewal for you so please check with your Sensei before completing your membership forms.

Message from Utah *Doug Jepperson, Sensei*

Here is a reply from one of my old black belts, Steve Mascaro.

"Congratulations on the reorganization and your role in furthering Wado International Karate-Do Federation's work. I have hanging in my office my 1st Dan Certificate from Suzuki Sensei. It is one of the things I am really proud of and I owe it to you and your training. Good luck on building the WIKF USA organization. I appreciate being kept in the loop on what is going on. In my mind I am still one of your karate-ka's (I think that is right) and will always appreciate the time you spent training me."

Steve has not been very active in the dojo lately because he is in **The House of Representatives** representing the Republican Party in Utah. He has been very active in trying to improve things in the State of Utah. He worked on an education bill which received national attention although it did not pass. But Steve is an example of what karate can do for you. And to have Suzuki Sensei's certificate hanging in his office is quite an honor for us as well. As I mentioned Steve is active in Utah politics and is the CEO of Valley Services, a terrific company that finds work for the disabled.

The Importance of Failure

Tom Kosslow, Sensei

I was a referee at a children's karate tournament and watched several children cry when they lost. I told them I understood that it never feels good to lose, because I had lost all over the world, but that I thought they were winners just for competing and putting themselves on the line. I don't know if that helped them any but I said it because that is what I believe. We constantly tell children that they can be whatever they want to be, that they can achieve whatever they want to achieve. Nothing wrong with that, but sometimes we forget to teach them that failure and long and hard work is frequently a price that needs to be paid before success takes place. One of the most important skills that our students can learn is a willingness to put themselves on the line time and again with no promise of success.

Many years ago I competed in the 50th Anniversary Wado World Karate Championships in Tokyo, Japan. I trained hard in a local gym to be sure I was in the best possible shape I could be in. For several months I traveled over four hours each way every weekend to train with my Sensei and fellow competitors. I was mentally and physically ready and yet I lost my second match and was eliminated.

Maybe if I had won and been a World Champion nothing would be different today. Maybe I would still go to the dojo three or four times a week to train. Maybe I would still judge at karate tournaments. But I think my understanding of the value of karate training and what can be learned from competition might be fundamentally different today because I think I would believe that the purpose was to win.

I trained then to win. I train now because it makes me feel good. When I train I feel better mentally and physically. I eat better, I sleep better, I am happier in my life. I am doing what I truly enjoy doing and not for what I can win. Nothing about what I do today has to do with winning and losing at that tournament. Training in karate is not about winning and losing. The truth of the matter is that sometimes you lose and sometimes you win in life. But failure, the kind of failure where you have done your best, isn't a bad thing. It is a lesson that took me a long time to learn and is even harder to teach. I know it's a hard sell for anyone especially in a culture where we tend to focus only on achievement and forget about the value of failure. The real moral of this story is that it is possible to try your best, work your hardest, give it

everything you've got and still fail. Twenty some years later it really doesn't matter that I lost. What I learned those years ago had nothing to do with that competition. I learned to take part in something for the sheer value and enjoyment of just doing it.

Believe Nothing?

Tom Kosslow

A young woman wanted to cook a roast so she called her mother who gave her instructions. One of the directions said to cut off two inches from the roast. The young woman asked her mother why you cut off the two inches. The mother responded that she did it because that's how her mother taught her to do it. So they called the grandmother to see why she cut off the two inches and the grandmother replied, "So it would fit in the pan."

"Believe nothing just because a so-called wise person said it. Believe nothing just because a belief is generally held. Believe nothing just because it is said in ancient books. Believe nothing just because it is said to be of divine origin. Believe nothing just because someone else believes it. Believe only what you yourself test and judge to be true." --- *from the Buddha*

A lot of things that take place in some dojo are done because that's the way someone told them to do it. The original purpose has long been forgotten. Some of what people do is just pure bunk! A good example according to Suzuki Sensei would be the practice of saying, "Shomen ni rei" at the beginning of a class. Shomen means the face or the front of the mat or dojo. Why would you bow to that? Now if you were in a really strict traditional dojo where a kamiza (shrine area) existed that might be a different story. How many of us have a dojo with a Shinto shrine in it? Sensei actually told me not to do shomen ni rei in my dojo because, "It's stupid." Good enough reason for me!

Now I am not suggesting that you question everything your Sensei tells you to do...at least not until and unless you have been at it long enough to ask intelligent questions. But there is nothing wrong with asking at a correct time WHY you do something in your dojo. Just remember it isn't necessary for you to agree with it or like it. It's one thing for students to just do what they are told but it's another thing for instructors not to know why they do things without really thinking about what they do. Master Otsuka is supposed to have said to question everything. To me it is obvious that he took his own advise and because of that formed Wado.