

North America



Wado International Karate-Do Federation DOJO CONNECTION

March 2006

SUMMER TRAINING CAMP

Come train with the Elk at 8,010 feet this June! The **WIKF North American Summer Training Camp** will be held at the Estes Park Y.M.C.A. in Colorado **June 8-11th**. The 5,100-acre Center is next to the picturesque Arapahoe National Forest just outside the quaint town of Estes Park. It is located within walking distance of the spectacular Rocky Mountain National Park with opportunities to hike, horseback ride, rock climb campfires, even shopping and entertainment.

Our guest instructor will be Sensei Jon Wicks, 7th Dan. Sensei Wicks is a 4 time European Kumite Champion and World Champion. He is Suzuki Sensei's most senior European student. Having trained with him in the past I can assure you he is excellent.

Morning training will be in T-shirts and sport shoes in the beautiful outdoors. Evening training will be indoors in karate uniforms. The training will take place Thursday evening thru Sunday morning. Advanced Wado techniques to be covered include kumite drills and strategy, Tanto Dori (knife defense), Idori (kneeling defense), and Tachi Dori (sword defense).

Dan grading will also be held for those who qualify.

Cost: 3 FULL DAYS \$150 for Kyu Grades and \$175 for Dan Grades. Current WIKF members will receive a \$50 discount on the training price.

**For more information contact
Sensei Mike Bevins at
mbevins@ichibankarateclub.com
Or call 303-875-0959**

That Funny Word, Zanshin

Michael Cimino-Hurt

As many of you know, I have chosen the name Zanshin for my dojo here in Virginia. Interestingly enough, after I did so, I found that an old acquaintance in Tennessee, Eric Silver, had also used the name for his dojo in Nashville. For a word that is used so much in martial arts literature and dojo parlance, it is still a fairly mysterious term. If you were to translate directly from Japanese, you get something like "remaining mind", and your first response would be "Huh? Where is the mind remaining? Did I leave it somewhere when I went out?" Sounds like a commercial doesn't it? "Your mind-don't leave home without it!"

The term comes from the practice of Zen, and there it means to be *in the moment* and conscious of all within your power of perception. It means to be focused on the here and the now to the exclusion of all else. It's a little funny to have a discipline that spends so much time talking about "no-mind" talking about where to put it, but that's Zen all over. In a sense, it means to be tuned in to reality, since what is here and what is now is all that is real. The future is imaginary and the past is no longer present. When your mind goes to these places, it is lingering in places that don't exist. Zen doesn't say that you can't plan for the future or remember the past; it just says that to live there is to miss the only life there really is. The corollary is: if you aren't living in the here and now, you aren't living at all.

("Oh great! Another of Hurt Sensei's incomprehensible lectures.") *Don't think I didn't hear that!* How is this useful in martial arts? I'm getting to that.

First, Ohtsuka Sensei once said, "If you find yourself in a dangerous situation, you have missed the first 'block'." There was a signal there that could have helped you avoid the situation in the first place. We sometimes hear that little voice saying, "Don't go

that way,” or “Something doesn’t feel right here.” Maybe it says, “We ought to go home now.” Or, “I should call my sister/mother/partner/child.” Maybe it’s just, “I have a funny feeling.” If you are from my generation, it might be a “weird vibe” or a “disturbance in the Force.” If you are not in the present, it is *very* difficult to hear that little voice, and even more difficult to follow it. But that little voice is the martial artist’s best friend, warning us in advance of danger we might otherwise walk blindly into. The problem with the little voice is that if you follow it and you don’t get into trouble, it is usually difficult to see later what it was talking about in the first place. Zanshin puts us in a place where we are the most receptive to that little voice.

Second, when we do have to fight, we have to be *right there in the fight*, not thinking about getting hurt, about what we should have done, about anything else. Suzuki Sensei says we have to fight with a calm mind. Your body may be shaking, but if you are in the moment, if you have *zanshin*, your mind can be calm like the eye of a hurricane. Then you may see the way through the situation, or see an opponent’s weakness.

So zanshin is a habit we ought to develop. How does this apply to our daily lives – because, you know, everything in karate applies to our everyday lives? Look around you. How many people do you see walking around with Ipod phones in their ears, totally oblivious to the world of the here and now? In a poll of people convicted of muggings and assaults, the criminals almost unanimously said they looked for victims that were distracted or not paying attention to their surroundings because they were easier prey. I love music more than most people – I was a professional musician for ten years – but there is a time and place for everything.

Think about that guy or gal who almost ran you off the road because he or she was talking on the cell phone. How many lives are endangered every day like this? By the way, recent studies show: (1) that wearing an earphone doesn’t reduce the distraction of cell phones and (2) a person talking on a cell phone has the same reaction time as someone who is legally drunk. Did you ever see anyone putting on makeup in the sun visor while driving on the interstate at sixty-five mph? Yep, I thought so. Kind of puts a different slant on the word *accident* doesn’t it?

These are only a few examples. I’m sure you can find more. Our culture pulls us further and further from the here and now every day, with video games,

television and a million other little diversions. So, if one of the reasons we study martial arts is to make us safer, to let us live and really be alive, to help protect others, isn’t the development of zanshin one of the most important tools it can provide for us?

Golden Colorado Friendship Cup

Mike Bevins

Just like last year I had a couple of guys, Tom Scott and Michael Perez, come stay and train with me for a tune up before the Friendship Cup in Golden, Colorado. After arriving Friday night we had some chit chat and caught up on news before going to bed. Come Saturday morning we headed for the gym for two hours of timing drills and combinations. After a lunch break, we headed back to the gym for more of the same. The rest of the day we rested, had dinner and later watched some tapes of Otsuka Sensei doing kata, a karate movie and then off to bed. The next day at the tournament, Tom and Michael started out with kata and did very well. In kumite Tom and Michael were in the same division so I coached them both down to the last fight where they had to fight each other for first and second place. They had a very good match with good technique and speed. I also think the referee’s very much enjoyed their match. I was very proud of both of them and they represented their dojo, the Academy of Classical Karate-Do in Plano, Texas, and WIKF USA very well with their strong competitive spirit. **Both Tom and Michael have been invited to represent the USA Junior Team in Japan in a few weeks.** I wish them great success! Here are the results:

Michael Perez: Silver Kumite- Junior Advanced Division

Tom Scott: Gold Kumite/Silver Kata – Jr. advanced Division

Mike Bevins: Bronze Kumite/Bronze Kata – 18-34 Division

Silver Kumite/Silver Kata – Veterans 35+ Division and recipient of the “Budo Spirit Award”

USA Membership Drive

March is the last month for USA members to renew their membership. Beginning in April all renewals will be treated as if they were new memberships as far as price is concerned. You can renew by going to the web page: www.wikfusa.com and doing it on line or downloading the form for mail in memberships.

New Dojo

For the second month in a row we are pleased to announce that we have accepted another dojo into the ranks of WIKF USA. The application of the **Karate Academy USA** located in Boynton Beach, Florida to become a member of our Federation was accepted upon the recommendation of Sensei Arturo Girona. Sensei Girona visited the club, which is headed up by **Mr. Anton Phillips**, and participated in the grading of students from this dojo. For more information on this newest member dojo you can go to their web site located at:

www.wado-ryu-karate-do.com

Kata Levels of Learning

Tom Kosslow

I once met a man who told me he knew 128 kata. I just looked at him and grinned at his comment. In WIKF we practice only 15. I remember once in my dojo Sensei made me run Kushanku for over two hours while he corrected me over and over. Arturo Girona says that Sensei once made him run Chinto for four hours until he was satisfied that Arturo either had it right or because Sensei just got tired and gave up. Part of his genius is his attention to detail. Sensei will correct your Pinan kata even if you had practiced it 1000 times. So to think of someone learning 128 kata that way is very funny to me. I don't think it can be done.

Now I will grant you that it might be possible for someone with a much better memory than mine to learn the sequence or pattern for that many kata but certainly their practice would never progress much past the first level which is just understanding the pattern. But practicing kata is a lot more than just practicing a pattern of techniques. Kata are performed on a number of different levels which take in the strategic, the psychological, the spiritual and the physical aspects. It is at these other levels that a lot goes on that most people never see or pay attention to and why it is so difficult to really say you have "learned" any given kata let alone 128 different ones.

At my **current level of understanding** (and I use current to indicate that as I learn more my understanding may well change) here are the levels of kata learning that I have come up with after thinking about it for a long time:

Level One- The student sees or understands the pattern of the kata and can replicate the pattern.

Level Two – The student is in the process of learning about the technique and movement within the pattern but doesn't have to concentrate on the pattern.

Level Three- The student has knowledge of and can properly execute both the pattern and the technique within the kata.

Level Four – The student understands and can demonstrate the kata with intent and reason (Ikita Kata). They understand some of the bunkai, both obvious and hidden, and they begin to apply the six principles of kata as Sensei has laid them out (they are listed in your WIKF Passport book).

Level Five – The student understands and knows where the six principles fit into the kata.

Level Six – The student has gained the wisdom to understand, apply, and make use of the principals of the kata.

Level Seven – The student becomes the fundamentals and principles taught in the kata.

There is an old saying that it takes at least three years to learn a kata. If you think in terms of levels you can understand why that may be true. I once told Sensei that if that he could not get too upset with me for not "knowing" all fifteen kata because that would take me at least 45 years and I had not been training that long. I think he would be happy if I learned just one of the 15 to the 7th level. I am starting to run out of time.

Kihon Waza

Tom Kosslow

The advanced techniques (Waza) of any art are based on the basic (Kihon) or fundamental things. If you can do the basic things right you can almost always learn to do the advanced things right also. If you never learn to do the basics correctly it is a sure bet you won't be able to do the advanced things correctly either. All the fancy looking moves and flashy costumes in the world won't make up for a lack of fundamental skill. The best karate-ka are the ones who spend a long time understanding how to do kihon waza correctly and then build their skill from this foundation.

