



Sensei Speaks—2016 Midwest-Okinawa Connection

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The 2016 Midwest-Okinawa Connection was a very successful and exciting event. The camp was held at The Wyndham West Hotel, Indianapolis. All of the campers seemed to have enjoyed themselves and they especially liked having everything in one location.

Hanshi Genka and Kyoshi Asato arrived on Tuesday the 17th and they truly enjoyed their time with everybody. They were especially complimentary of the treatment received from everybody. They did have the opportunity to visit my Dojo and meet students from both my and Mr. Michael's

Dojo

On Thursday we went to the 500 race track. That was a fun and exciting experience for them. We watched the cars as they went around the track; the highest speed while we were there was 227; and we went into the museum. There were many photos taken there. You would have to have been there to see their faces as we went through the day. Kyoshi Stolsmark, his wife, Kyoshi Ward and Brooke were with us at the track.

I have not said very much about Naoko who was the interpreter. She was really a

great help to me for the entire camp. Hanshi Genka had met her on a previous trip but it was the first time for Kyoshi Asato. They met initially on Wednesday and became very well acquainted. I thank her so much for just being there and helping to make the Okinawans feel comfortable and welcome.

Special points of interest:

- *How to improve your kata performance.*
- *Learning something new and interesting.*
- *Who is the Student Of The Month?*
- *What is interesting about your Sensei?*
- *See what's going on this month.*

Spring Smash Competition

All of our students who competed in the 2016 Spring Smash did very well. Mr. Michael does an excellent job at promoting the event and getting competitors to come. I certainly appreciate our students for being very supportive of all of the events This year.

Students attending the tournament were Mr. Solomon, Mr. LaMons, Ms. LaMons,

Mr. Kearney and Mr. Earl.

All of these students along with Mr. Brading competed in the tournament on Saturday and did very well. I highly commend all of the students for the way that they have stepped up their competition. The task will become more difficult as they grow in rank. Mr. Brading has proven that again and again.

Youth Kata Enhancement Class

At the 2016 Midwest-Okinawa Connection. There was an array of classes that were a bit different from previous camps. This was an opportunity to get some extra training to our youth. Having put that on the itinerary I was able to select the perfect instructor for the class.

I selected Sensei Steve Franz for that task. I don't believe that there could have been a better person for that task. Mr. Franz has been excellent in keeping his students as

top performers at tournaments and therefore solidified my choice in selecting him. He also has a great rapport with the youth and communicates very well with them.

I don't think that the kids really knew what to expect out of the class as they joined it. However, they were not in there very long before the smiles began surging forward and their energy level heightened. Mr. Franz simply had them take some things out of their kata and

work on them as he made suggestions. Before you knew it they were beginning to put things together as he had suggested and their performance started upward. They did not become perfectionists in one class but they certainly made some great strides.

We did not have any pre-registrations for the Nakazato Cup competition, so, we did not have one this year. That is unfortunate and it concerned me but I will push it harder the next time.

“Behind fear is powerlessness.”

System Study—Yakusoku Kumite

We got the 2016 camp started on a really good note. That is, we began by reviewing all Yakusoku Kumite. The majority of the senior students have a really good grasp of the Yakusoku. However, the idea was to set the pace for working two man drills.

Minoru Sensei has introduced a new set of Yakusoku. Few of the Ameri-

can students know these and all are anxious to learn them. During my April trip, we had the opportunity to learn the next set that he is introducing. The first two sets that were introduced have been learned by most of the senior students. These are fairly simple but difficult to learn. All of the students who have done them seem to be well pleased in working them. We will be focusing on

all of these to ensure that all of the senior students will have a good grasp when Sensei gets to see us do them again.

The most recent set that we learned are very basic and I refer to them as Kihons. Sensei said that these would be good for kids and beginner adults. Regardless they are good learning tools.

Student Of The Month

The Student Of The Month selection is often challenging but I wonder if students really want the selection. I have been looking at different methods and standards by which to make the selection but have not come up with one yet. However, the selection has been made and I am personally pleased with the selection.

Our *S.O.M. for the month is Ms. Zereya Woodard*. Ms. Woodard has established herself as a student who wants to learn and do well in her karate. She is regularly in class and always eager to follow instructions and move on to the next task. She has always been a student who readily complies with the rules and/or

standards set by those who have gone before her. She has demonstrated a competitive nature which is a great asset and an attribute to her.

I am proud to have her as a student and looking forward to her growth in karate and the martial arts. Certainly she is destined to become a Black Belt who stands ahead of the pack.

Youth Nakazato Cup Competition

The Midwest-Okinawa Connection established a tradition in having the Nakazato Cup Competitions. In the past the competitions had always been for the Black Belts. Each year the competition was won by either Richard Poage or Derek Brading. Both of these students have done excellent in kata competition on the open tournament circuit. They were competitive enough that they caused others to shun the Nakazato Cup competition.

Since the adult Black Belts began shunning the competition it was decided that the youth should be given the opportunity to compete for the cup. They did exactly that.

They were given three kata to be used in each round of the competition. The competition consisted of three rounds. Two people were eliminated in the first round, with three being eliminated in the second round. The competition became more exciting with each round.

This year we did not have the competition because there were no registrations before camp started. That is an unfortunate circumstance and I will accept full responsibility for that. Maybe it was not emphasized enough before the camp began.

I will continue to have the Nakazato Cup as part of the camp in honor of my Sensei Hanshi Judan Shugoro Nakazato. I am sure that the Okinawans would have enjoyed observing the kids and their kata performances.

Congratulations To Our Graduates

May was a month graduation and there were those who were ready. Upgrading is always important but even more important is to know the material required. We have been a bit more intense in covering material during graduation and everybody has measured up to the standard. Following is a list of those who upgraded in karate and kobudo.

Ku-Kyu

Mr. Stodgell

Hachi-Kyu

Mr. Fahrman

Ni-Kyu

Mr. LaMons

Ms. LaMons

Kobudo Upgrades

Rok-Kyu

Mr. Solomon

Go-Kyu

Mr. LaMons

Ms. LaMons

Congratulations to all of you and I will look forward to you making the next step. Continue to train hard and let yourselves enjoy the journey. Best to you all.

"The human emotional system can be broken down into roughly two elements: fear and love. Love is of the soul, fear is of the personality."

Kobayashi National karate Championships

It is amazing that the time is here already for the Kobayashi tournament. I say it all of the time and it is true that time flies when you are having fun. The tournament is scheduled for Saturday, June 4th, at Carver Center located at 1030 N Purdum Street.

The Tournament is especially noted for youth grand

championships. There are three bicycles given away each year. These grand championships are for kata. The age groups will include first place winners in the 8 years and under; 9 to 12 years; and 13 to 17 years. The kata competition has become very intense in the kid's divisions and makes for quite a bit of excitement. In

the years that we have done the tournament there have been two students from the Dojo to win bicycles. The most recent was Mr. Solomon who won a bicycle last year. Prior to that I can't tell you what year it was.

Anyway, we will have a good tournament and thanks for all of your help in advance.

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Special Events

June 4th—Kobayashi National Karate Championships

June 7th—Chanbara

June 8th—Brn/Blk Belt 10—11:30 & 7—8:30

June 12th—Father's Day-Show some love for Dad

June 17th—Warrior Gasshuku Milwaukee, Wi

June 18th—Camp Milwaukee, Wi

June 19th—Camp Milwaukee, Wi

June 21st—Chanbara

June 22nd—Brn/Blk Belt 10—11:30 & 7—8:30

June 24th—USKK Trias Cup Peoria, Il

June 25th—USKK Trias Cup Peoria, Il

June 26th—USKK Trias Cup Peoria, Il

Karate History—Sensei

Few will know that I suffered a bout with Jaundice and Hepatitis just before graduating high school. Actually, I became sick immediately as I came home from my Prom. This came very close to keeping me out of the military. I was back and forth to the Induction Center five times before I was finally inducted.

For most it would be difficult to imagine what this was like for me. My parents had to sign for me to get into the military and my dream was about to go down the drain. During those trips back and forth I was afraid but

certain that I would not get into the military. However, I know that it was divine intervention that got me into the military. God has a way of working things out for us.

After getting into the military I was determined to make a better life for myself. I did not want to live my adult life like that of my father. My father was good and spent lots of time with me. He always worked jobs that did not pay very much. He always encouraged me in school and said that he did not want me to travel the road that he traveled.

Basic training took place

at Lackland AFB, Tx. Military buildup was underway and training was cut to eight weeks. There was lots going on between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. That period was known as the "cold war." I completed basic training and was stationed at Maxwell AFB, Al. Being raised in the south made that an easy assignment for me. I was assigned to the Motor Pool and did not know how to drive. Primarily I was a military taxi driver. I learned to drive using a mop bucket. There were no automatic transmissions. I did well on that assignment and left for Okinawa in May 1966.