

THE MAKIWARA

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AOKA

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Updates

By Grand Master Stephen Young, Chairman and CEO

We are fast approaching this year's AOKA Isshinryu World Championships. As you probably know, they are being held in early August in Charlotte, NC. Grand Master Mitch Kobylanski is hosting the event. More information is contained later in the newsletter. Several items I want to make you aware of regarding the tournament:

- Pre-registration will soon be available by going to www.AOKA.org. Current AOKA members receive a discounted rate for tournament pre-registration. You will also be able to order banquet tickets, t-shirts and will be able to register for the seminars at this site. Upon checkout, you will see that your transaction is processed via a secure website and server.
- Make sure you get your awards nominations in by April 15th. Again, you can go to our website and submit these electronically. Please remember that you MUST BE A CURRENT AOKA MEMBER in order to be nominated.
- People wanting to test for rank must also register and receive approval by May 31, 2008.

Aside from the tournament, there will be a slight change to the distribution of the newsletters. Apparently, the email system used has been dropping some people. I have changed systems and in addition, we will post the newsletter on the website by the end of every other month, beginning this February. So, by February 29 (this is a leap year) we will have the February newsletter posted. The next one will be available at the end of April. We have also posted past newsletters that may be downloaded. Don't forget to send in articles, tournament dates, seminar information, etc. to the newsletter committee!

We are currently testing some technology that will allow us to tape (or broadcast live) seminars and to share them via internet access. We plan to have a couple of tests and then start broadcasting seminars on a periodic basis for current AOKA members that have web access to view. More information will soon follow.

Finally, please make sure you are current on your AOKA dues. Your dues help make our progress possible. We are trying to keep fees very low, while enhancing member benefits.

I look forward to seeing you at the AOKA Isshinryu World Championships in August!

February 2008

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AOKA Awards

By Sensei Peter Williams, Jr., Chairperson, Awards Committee

Time is running short. I know that the World Championships seems so far away, but it is closer than we think! The awards committee will be reviewing nominations soon and need everyone to submit individuals for each category. Below are the guidelines and criteria that the committee uses to select winners and finalist. Some changes have been made, so hopefully this will be helpful to all. Please note that a new Category: AOKA Supporter of the Year has been added. Please see below for details.

1. The deadline date is April 15th. The logistics for verification of applicants, voting, making the plaques and having everything ready for the world championships requires a lot of time and preparation in order to have everything ready for the World Championships.
2. In the past, previous winners were not eligible for the same award. Now, after a waiting period, previous winners will be eligible. For kyu ranks, a 3 year waiting period for a previous awards winner and 5 years for any previous black belt award.
3. A minimum of 3 nominations is required for any category in order for a winner and finalist to be se-

lected. Otherwise that category will be eliminated for that year.

4. A point system has been developed to choose a winner and finalist. Each committee member would choose their first, second and third choice candidate. The first choice is 5 points, 2nd choice-3 points, and 3rd choice-1point. The winner would be the individual with the most points. Two finalists would be chosen from the next two highest points received by candidates.
5. Remember, no member of the AOKA Executive Board is eligible for nomination. Any member of the Awards Committee nominated for an award, he/she will abstain from voting in that category.
6. The winner is based on the merits of their nomination, not the number of nominations. The award committee considers participation in school and community as well as in the Dojo. Does the individual participate in extra curricular activities? Do they strive and achieve in school and work (honor roll, student of the month, etc.)

AOKA Awards Criteria

In order for a candidate to be eligible, he or she must be an active member of the AOKA prior to the time of their application for the award being submitted. The categories and requirements are listed below:

Outstanding Youth- Male: 17 years and under; Number of AOKA events participated in; Number of Tournaments participated, places taken, size of tournament; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training; Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Other major personal achievements.

Outstanding Youth-Female: 17 years and under; Number of AOKA events participated in; Number of Tournaments participated, places taken, size of tournament; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training; Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Other major personal achievements.

Outstanding Adult- Male: 18 years and older; Number of AOKA events participated in; Number of tournaments participated, places taken, size of tournament; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training (quality and frequency); Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Role model attributes (e.g. grades, honors, awards, etc).

Outstanding Adult- Female: 18 years and older; Number of AOKA events participated in; Number of tournaments participated, places taken, size of tournament; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training (quality and frequency); Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Role model attributes (e.g. grades, honors, awards, etc).

Outstanding Youth Black belt: 17 years or under; Minimum of one year and current member of the AOKA; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training (quality and frequency); Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Role model attributes (e.g. grades, honors, awards, etc); Major personal achievements.

Outstanding Black belt-Male: 18 years or older; Minimum of one year and current member of the AOKA; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training (quality and frequency); Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Role model attributes (e.g. grades, honors, awards, etc); Major personal achievements.

Outstanding Black belt-Female: 18 years or older; Minimum of one year and current member of the AOKA; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training (quality and frequency); Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Role model attributes (e.g. grades, honors, awards, etc); Major personal achievements.

Outstanding Instructor-Male: 3rd degree black belt or above; 18 years or older; Minimum of one year and current member of the AOKA and AOKA registered dojo; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training (quality and frequency); Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Role model attributes (e.g. grades, honors, awards, etc); Teaching responsibilities (number of classes, levels, etc.).

Outstanding Instructor-Female: 3rd degree black belt or above and 18 years or older; Minimum of one year and current member of the AOKA and AOKA registered dojo; Supports activities for dojo, AOKA, and Isshinryu; Actively continues training (quality and frequency); Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Role model attributes (e.g. grades, honors, awards, etc); Teaching responsibilities (number of classes, levels, etc.).

Isshinryu Spirit Award: Black belt, 18 years or older and current AOKA member; Actively continues training and supports Isshinryu; Takes an active role in community, church, family, and other services; Role model attributes (e.g. grades, honors, awards, etc); Evidence of exceptional dedication to Isshinryu.

AOKA Supporter of the Year(New Category): This award is presented to an individual who is not an Isshinryu practitioner, but has shown their support to the AOKA by helping at an AOKA approved school and the AOKA World Championships. This individual may be a parent or guardian, sibling or even a friend that has helped above and beyond normal expectations.

A Theory on Mastery

By Jeffrey W. Conger, Shodan, Withee, Wisconsin

Everyone has their own definition of mastery. It's usually acquired by years of training. For some it takes a lifetime for others just a few years, but it all boils down to several key ingredients.

As mastery pertains to Martial Arts, I'm sure all would agree that **DISCIPLINE** is one of the prime factors. The focus and hard work needed to train - to tell oneself not to quit. You discipline yourself to abide by the rules, customs and ideals set forth by your instructors.

For all the time and effort put into our training, we **SACRIFICE** a lot of things. We forfeit time we could spend with our friends and family. We give up material things to be able to continue on the road to mastery - all this for the betterment of oneself.

It goes without saying, that for all that is happening in our lives, we are tempted to drift away from the path. That's where **PERSISTANCE** comes into play - to hold on to the ideals and skills which we are taught despite all the obstacles.

Put **FAITH** into the equation as well. Why would we be willing to give up the things we do, to persist in the teachings of our instructors, if we didn't believe in them or their abilities? Isn't it then fair to say that if we have faith in them? Then we should also believe in ourselves. **CONVICTION**, the strong belief that what we are taught is right, in our own skills and techniques. Those same techniques that have been passed down through the ages? It's apparent that they do, otherwise they would not waist the time to teach.

For that we give our instructors **RESPECT**. We put them in high regard because of their accomplishments. We respect them for their skills. We avoid violating the rules and customs passed down to them. Every so often students think they can challenge the knowledge of their peers. In the majority of cases, things turn out being a lesson in **HUMILITY**. The fact that you are not too proud and that you recognize your own faults. The impatient and disrespecting person usually walks away with bumps and bruises, along with a feeling of shame for having second-guessed their teachers. That's when they should realize that **PATIENCE** is the best virtue. All good things come to those who wait; not

everyone excels at the same rate. Patience itself can be a lesson in humility.

To take the results of those lessons and turn them into something positive is **KNOWLEDGE** best gained - An awareness or understanding of the experiences. As one continues down the path of enlightenment, each experience gives them something new to learn from. For every positive and negative outcome, **WISDOM** is gained. An understanding of what is right and true. It gives us a well of information from which we base our common sense, to make good judgments.

During our time of experiences, we become tempted in many ways to make wrong decisions. It's our **STRENGTH** of mind and body that carries us on - the power to resist that, which would cause ill. Not to say that we are without **JUSTICE**. The upholding of what is fair by our laws or standards.

With all of the influence that life has to offer, **LOYALTY** to our teachers, discipline, and ourselves, become a great **HONOR**. A great privilege or distinction that sets us apart. Some may term it as **ATTITUDE**. A state of mind or feeling that we have towards ourselves and others. Negative attitudes lead to failures and disappointments. A positive frame of mind will increase many aspects towards mastery. You soon have more **COURAGE** than when you started your journey. Your **SPIRIT**, the sense of significance or the inner being, rises to new levels.

One must also remain **FLUID** and open-minded. With so many obstacles put before us, knowing which way to turn is always a never-ending battle. It's easy to get wrapped up with distractions. **GOALS** and **DETERMINATION** beat the distractions aside.

Having a good support team by your side will also help in reaching mastery. Your friends, family, and fellow martial artists will see things that you may miss. Have we come so far as to believe that we are all seeing, all knowing? Be **HONEST** with yourself. You may have studied for many, many years, but is mastery ever truly attained?

Mastery by dictionary terms means to be in full com-

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Upcoming Isshinryu Events

(source: <http://www.bohans-family.com/Events/UpcomingEvents.htm>)

Date	Location	Event
22-23 Feb-2008	Virginia Beach, VA	The Beach Blast Martial Arts Championship
11-13 Apr-2008	Northville, MI	Weapons Connection 2008 Spring Weapons Camp
12-Apr-2008	Knoxville, TN	The Harold Long Memorial Tournament
26-Apr-2008	King George, VA	5th Annual King George Isshinryu Open
29-Jun-2008	Fredericksburg, VA	The Don Bohan/Rick Niemira Memorial
9-Mar-2008	Ottawa, Ontario	AOKA Weapons Seminar Hosted by Grand Master Mady.
9-Mar-2008	Ottawa, Ontario	Fighting Seminar Hosted by Grand Master Mady.
25-27 Jul-2008	Burlington, NC	Camp Budo
26 Jul-2008	Gatlinburg, TN	IHOF Tournament
8-9 Aug-2008	Charlotte, NC	2008 AOKA World Championships and Awards Banquet

PROMOTIONS

Derek Dunnett, Shodan, Toshikai Dojo,
Ottawa, ON



Congratulations to Alain Therrien, member of Tradition Karate, on his recent promotion to Green Belt. L to R: Sensei Don Therrien, Alain Therrien, Sensei Pete Williams.

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mand or control, as of a subject or situation. In my opinion, mastery by martial arts terms means to be in full command or control of oneself. It's one thing to say that you're a good martial artist. It's something completely different to say you're a master. Though it is truly impossible to become a master of oneself we will always strive to become the best at what we do. Some martial artists may be controversial on their earning of

their rank, but for those who have truly earned it, there is a display of good morals, good judgment, and good sportsmanship. These are the ones to look up to for guidance in our journey. For they have found a key to balance of skill, faith and harmony.

As I sit back and think of what it takes to become a master in martial arts, I realize I have a long road ahead of me. For those who have attained such an honorable station, I salute you.

Women In Karate, My Thoughts

By Tanya Lemaire, Shodan, Toshikai Dojo of Ottawa

It's fun to people watch, isn't it? How a person approaches new situations and how they handle themselves really tells you a lot about them. As a water bottle, I do a lot of sitting on the sidelines and watching people as they participate in their chosen activities.

I have had the pleasure of watching someone take up various sports over their lifetime such as horseback riding, downhill skiing, Ultimate Frisbee, running and karate. Of all her activities I can safely say that karate has changed her the most, for the better.

As her water bottle, I watched with pride and pleasure over the last nine years as she worked on her technique with basics and kata, gained confidence in herself for sparring and self defense and learned what made her tick as a karate-ka and a person. She has overcome personal challenges and takes her role in the dojo as Sampai, and that of the only female in the karate club, very seriously. She has learned to offer sound and experienced advice and guidance to fellow club members, which from what I can tell, is well received.

These days we're preparing for Shodan testing. And wow, what a ride this has been! She has taken everything she's learned about karate in the last nine years and about herself as a person, and is focusing her attention and energy into preparing for this event. I've never seen her as busy as she works out almost every day to prepare her mind and body for this new challenge. She took up boxing to improve and control her power to help with her sparring. She started running again to meet the Shodan physical requirement and to increase her cardio fitness. As her proud water bottle, I can say we're on the go and having fun!

I should take this moment to point out that she was diagnosed with asthma six years ago and that's it's very hard for me to watch her struggle whenever she has flare ups. But it is encouraging to see her learn to use these challenging moments to deepen her resolve to overcome this disease in order to continue to improve her fitness and endurance and, to continue her karate career. She uses her weaknesses as challenges to overcome and faces them head on to the best of her ability. This trait has been strengthened by her commitment to

karate and is one she shares with the club's junior kyu to encourage them and help them along with their personal challenges with karate.

From what I can see, her challenges are the same as those the men in the club have to overcome. It seems as though everyone at one point struggles with lack of self-confidence, fear of failure and even the physical part of karate. From what I can see, as a mere water bottle, not too many people can do fifty knuckle push-ups right off the bat, this skill takes training and commitment. Using her learned experience, she has offered support and guidance to those who seek if and has grown into her role as Sampai.

Compared to the other sports I've seen her do, horseback riding, Ultimate Frisbee and volleyball, karate, unlike other individual sports, really becomes a way of life where the person embraces the true meaning of "empty hands" in their day to day life by growing as a person as their skills develop. I've seen her confidence in her abilities grow over the years and it's quite the thing to say that you're doing karate and that you spar with people and break boards, for fun! She gets a lot of raised eyebrows when she tells people she's a Brown Belt in karate and that yes she fights against boys. What they don't understand, since they don't understand the true meaning of karate and how it changes a person, is that she chooses to do this activity year after year and chooses to overcome her internal fears to become a stronger and more grounded person. Simply choosing to come back time after time is noteworthy. Gotta respect that, eh?

As I've mentioned before, I'm a water bottle, so speaking about the inner thoughts and feelings of humans is not my specialty. But what I can do, and I do it a lot, is observe people and make comments on what I see of their behavior. What I see are people who enjoy the challenges of martial arts, whether they are male or female, and that to progress in this sport is to find your own path. I have seen my owner struggle to bring the "Eye of the Tiger", i.e. more power, to her kata and to overcome some personal struggles to become a better fighter in class. But what I also observe are the men

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finding their own path in karate as well. So to me, the differences are not in what has to be overcome, but in how the challenges are met.

Women in karate, and I've seen this time and again, have many additional demands on their time such as raising children and taking care of their homes, whereas the men seem to be less burdened with these demands. Over the nine years she has been studying karate we have seen many women come and go, men too, but the ratio is much higher for women. This is too bad since karate is an activity with so many more benefits than just the sweat. Oh well, there's not much I can do from the sidelines but to provide the hydration and all she can do is be there for the women when they do come to try the classes out and encourage them as best she can.

From my perspective on the sidelines, the most obvious challenge that women face, more so than the men, is the physical component of karate. In this club there is no quarter given to the women when it comes to the physical requirements such as pushups, crunches, run-

ning and sparring. It is understood that these things are harder, but the expectation is still the same. In some ways, it's encouraging for her, and other women, to be treated the same, but on the other hand it is also difficult knowing that you're entering the same arena, so to speak, with a significant disadvantage.

I know for her, it has helped tremendously knowing her Sensei's understand that the physical differences are difficult and they are encouraging and supporting her training along the way. See this is where having other women in the club is good so they can share their frustrations with someone who has or is in the same situation. This is the difference between empathy from other women and sympathy from the men. Big words for a water bottle eh?

So there are "my" thoughts on women in karate, having had the distinct advantage of observing a woman in training from their white belt through to final preparations for their black belt. It has been quite the ride with many ups and downs and I can only look forward to her next chapter, or first step, in karate as a Shodan! She is so going to kick some butt.

Tournament T-Shirts!

T-shirts will cost \$15.00 US.

Shirts should be available in March.

Color of shirt will be natural. Sizes available: youth large, Adult S, M, L, XL, or XXL.

Visit the AOKA website to place your order!



Isshinryu By Long Distance

By COL. Walt Ellingson, U.S.M.C., Yon Kyu, New Orleans LA

During the short course of my life, I have studied a number of martial art forms – Aikido, Judo, Tae Kwon Do and now Isshinryu. I have gone through numerous academic schools and post degree programs – to include obtaining a Master's degree by corresponding studies. As I have come to an appreciation of Isshin-Ryu – mainly through the patient efforts of an instructor who was willing to take time from his full time job to work out as many as 5 days a week on a consistent basis I have developed an affinity to Isshin-Ryu.

Since our Sensei retired from the Navy and moved out of southern Louisiana and our newly “minted” black belt was offered a job opportunity that he couldn't resist (I wouldn't have been able to resist either)-- we were suddenly left with literally no adult supervision = no Sensei here to guide and correct. Would the core of four continue – how would we learn new kata and progress? Would we learn new kata and progress? The answer has not been an easy one to determine. The four have continued – albeit by long distance learning. I have spoken to some who have learned it the same way – and it's not easy. It requires discipline, effort, and commitment.

Impact

We noted areas that were immediately adversely impacted: we didn't feel comfortable with jujitsu practice - this seemed to be a little too dangerous to practice without proper supervision. Kata - we are only trained up to certain levels. We also found that available text and guidebooks are insufficient or are outdated. I've personally searched the internet repeatedly with all kinds of findings but very little written down in a format that meets the AOKA interpretation and method.

So how “do” we do it? What a concept or so we thought. How do you; can you; learn kata, bunkai, movements, and weapons without a resident instructor? Is this a set up for failure? At younger age, answers to those questions for me would be a clear yes... but now that I'm older (and not necessarily wiser) but definitely more experienced, the answer is not quite so clear.

We decided that we wanted to keep the dojo going and have committed to make it work. Some considered attending a local school or dojo. However, the local schools have no affiliation with AOKA (and as most of

us didn't want to start from scratch or have to relearn nuances of Isshinryu from a different perspective - this was not a viable option). We could dissolve the dojo – but that did not make any sense to us for the time we had invested, or we could keep the dojo functioning – by long distance?

This is not say there is no support for us – we are fortunate have two Sensei's that are helping us – and have seen them a couple of times over the past 7 months – it's hard on them as well as us. The Sensei's are not doing it for the money (the students aren't either). The times we have been able to spend has been educational, instructional (as in how many times do I need to be Uke to Master Boykin's Naihanchi bunkai?), and enjoyable.

What have we done?

Applying the second Code of Karate, “The blood circulating is similar to the sun and the moon” to what we are doing - we are not stagnating, we are constantly in motion – at least in our minds, moving forward, doing what we can to facilitate our training. We found that each karate-ka has a unique talent and skill set whether it's by size, strength, technique or teaching ability and it's not limited to the belt they happen to be wearing -- we are able to learn from each other. Another person's strength maybe an area of weakness -- but as this is discovered we can collaboratively focus on the issue and then fix it -- this doesn't necessarily mean that I like what I'm hearing or that I necessarily agree with it, but it's another perspective from which I can learn. We've used DVDs to learn and refresh learning, i.e. Kusanku -- by the way have you ever tried learning Kusanku by DVD? We did, it's a humbling and long process and takes much longer than when you have an instructor on deck.

While remaining as true (was we know how to do it) we have connected with a Shorin-Ryu practitioner to learn from him – to take what drills (Ippon Kumite) we can from that system and where applicable, modifying the practice sessions to Isshinryu techniques instead of Shorin Ryu. We have recently incorpo-

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rated Brazilian jujitsu training with a coworker as part of our Wednesday routine. We are also planning to work with a couple of Tao Kwon Do practitioners to assist us with kicking and kicking drills. Thursdays remain devoted to kata - self-analyzing as well as review from our fellow dojo mates - yes while we will defend our mates outside - we still eat our own.

Does this take anything away from Isshinryu - I don't believe so. Rather, it builds on the Isshinryu foundation. What does it do for us? A couple of things - it exposes us to other combat forms, provides additional tools for our toolkit and keeps the learning curve moving forward. These other folks benefit as well - Shorin-ryu couldn't defend against the vertical fist - why? Because it's not practiced in Shorin Ryu. It also helps us to gain a greater appreciation of what these of the styles can bring to the table. As unlearned as we are, these other martial artists are learning a fine appreciation of what Isshinryu can do. Some of us are looking into the possibility of joining a local kubodo school to broaden our perspectives and abilities

This does not discount our Instructor's efforts - but they live 300 miles and 900 miles away respectively, they have other lives, jobs, families, and local dojos

that they support. They are trying - they are helpful and continue to encourage and answer questions and visit here or at some halfway point either for a training session or two - but it's not the same. Our Sensei's keep in touch and as soon as we are a little more technologically advanced we plan to begin using e-mail or a website and MP4 video clips for Sensei critiques. We are not there yet, but plan to be there soon.

What is the difference?

All of us (there are only four) are all either Active, Reserve and prior service military members. The youngest of the bunch is in his late 30s - so maybe there is a greater level of maturity and patience. I surmise the bottom-line for why are continuing to stick with Isshinryu is the value we see added in terms of quality of life, health, potential and life style. Perhaps being military and prior service, maybe we just don't know the meaning of not accomplishing the mission. We are now in month seven and still functioning, training three days a week and one and one half hours in a session.

With all this written, we can say that AOKA Isshinryu remains alive in southern Louisiana, we are committed to keeping it going through discipline, effort and commitment; and, we are looking forward to what the new year will bring.

One Heart Way—But Not The Only Way

By CDR. Neil Smith, U.S. Navy, Yon Kyu, New Orleans LA

Every student of Isshinryu knows that Master Shimabuku was a student of many forms of martial arts. These same students also know that Master Shimabuku took what he determined to be the best of the different disciplines and melded them into the system he named Isshinryu. But, how many students of Isshinryu have exposed themselves to different martial arts disciplines? How many students have compared themselves, and Isshinryu, against other martial arts disciplines? Should an "inexperienced" student undertake such an endeavor?

I'm sure a carefully crafted poll could provide answers to the first two questions that would be interesting fodder for discussions at another time. That same poll, I'm sure, would show that the answer to the third ques-

tion would have many different answers, and supporting arguments, as there are readers of this article. The last question is not rhetorical, so in the interest of providing a point of departure for discussion (and maybe some letters to the editor), I humbly provide my answer and opinion.

First, a bit in the way of background. I am an officer in the United States Navy, currently serving on active duty. I have been a student of Isshinryu for about 18 months and hold the rank of Yon Kyu. My Sensei is a retired Navy officer, and my fellow dojo mates are all in, or associated with, the military. The military connection here is important because my exposure to different mar-

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tial arts disciplines at this point in my journey is solely due to my work interactions.

Well, that last statement is not exactly true. My first exposure to formal martial arts instruction came when I was in high school. I attended a summer wrestling camp between my sophomore and junior year. It was there that I was formally exposed to martial arts, in this particular case, Judo. Our coaches thought it would be a great idea to expose us to this martial art because both Judo and collegiate-style wrestling require working from a standing position (and there was a Judo camp going on at the same time). That's where the similarities ended for the Judo students and wrestlers. It was a very interesting afternoon; singlet-clad wrestlers and gi-clad Judo students attempting to best each other while staying within the confines of their respective systems. No wrestler would try (after the first few hard landings) any upper body moves, while the judo students had significant difficulty grabbing sweaty skin and learned to never let a wrestler grab a leg. Neither opponent could achieve advantageous hip position because both disciplines stress the importance of body position. This memorable lesson, at an arguably young and impressionable age, led to my open-minded (some might say tolerant) position regarding different martial disciplines.

Back to the military connection. It was only when I arrived at my current duty station that I actually took my first formal steps on my martial arts journey. While this journey was "officially" down the Isshinryu path, my Sensei took us on little side trips into Judo and Ju Jitsu. Not only did he lead some of these excursions, he also urged us to explore on our own. That attitude fit nicely in with my own personal philosophy.

In case you hadn't guessed already; I'll come right out and say it. I'm all for any student, of any experience level, exposing themselves to different martial arts. I

especially think they should compare themselves, and Isshinryu against other martial arts. I must stress though, that this exposure and comparison be accomplished under experienced supervision to prevent any injuries.

One of the neat things about our dojo is that it's in a very public area on a military installation. We normally work out in a mat room reserved for Marine Corps activities, or else we occupy an aerobics room that has a significant flow of people. This has helped in exposing me and my mates to different martial arts because people are naturally curious when they see bodies flying, hear an especially loud kiai, or see sparring in progress. We also get questions as we traverse the base in our gis. This somewhat unique arrangement resulted in "extended guest appearances" by a mixed martial artist and students of Brazilian Ju Jitsu, Shorin Ryu, Tae Kwon Do, Tang Soo Do, and the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP).

I can say, without any reservation, that all of these experiences provided nothing but benefits to all participants. Learning occurred on both sides, the relative amount only dictated by time available and dedication to learning. I learned some very effective self-defense moves applicable to my body type from MCMAP (Marine Corps Martial Arts Program). Experiencing locks and groundwork from Brazilian Ju Jitsu helped reinforce muscle memories learned as a wrestler. Working with other martial artists, I learned something of their system's "philosophies" and preferred kumite styles. This not only broadened my "academic" knowledge, it also drove home the point of developing a broad range of kumite options to handle different fighting styles. Our fellow martial artists also walked away with new information and techniques they could internalize and share in their dojos. More importantly, I learned that Isshinryu is the right path for my martial arts journey.

Ask The Masters

In the last edition, we provided some background information about Master Robert Markovich. This permitted readers to develop questions to ask him. Below are



Master Robert Markovich

questions submitted to Master Markovich with his answers.

You have been training in Isshinryu for a long time but continue to branch out training in Arnis and opening new Dojo's. What pushes you to keep improving and helping others improve?

Well, as I said before, my wife thinks that I'm crazy. However, I don't agree with this point of view. I think that after 40 years it has become a way of life, not to mention that it is a way to remain healthy and active. If I stop doing it, I'll feel guilty and there will be something missing. Another important factor for me are the friendships of like-minded people that I have developed over the years. My career has been teaching. I was a high school teacher until I retired and I enjoyed it. Karate is an extension of this.

What Kata do you most enjoy teaching?

I enjoy teaching Seisan kata the most because there is so much in it in terms of applications. 'The 'chicken head' block can be translated into five or six effective techniques, just to mention one move. The kata that I like to perform however is Chinto.

What is your favorite memory from your time as a student?

I think my favorite memory is being young and training

at a time when karate was a fairly new sport for North Americans and no one had to worry about being taken to court.

What do you wish Isshinryu Karateka in general would put more effort into?

I think that everyone should put a lot more effort into basics as they are the foundation of good kata and good self defense. Kumite is good but it can take you only so far. Kumite is a sport for the young. When one becomes older one finds that it becomes more difficult to keep up. That is why it is good to learn grappling techniques so that it becomes possible to subdue an opponent quickly. There are a lot of grappling techniques in kata.

What are you most proud of as an Instructor?

I guess that I am most proud of the fact that at nearly 68 I am still in the game and able to work with my students at almost the same physical level as I've always done. I am also pleased that I have not become stale mentally. Each new group of students is a new challenge. It is very gratifying to see them succeed and progress through the ranks.

At this point in your training, who would you most like the opportunity to train with and learn from (any style, anywhere)?

I think that I would have liked to train with a jujitsu master such as Wally J. The high point of my career was training with the late Grand Master Remy Presas in Arnis.

Ask The Masters

The next master to be interviewed is Master Tim Boykin. The following information is provided to you to assist in asking questions of him for publication in the next edition of *The Makinvara*.



Master Tim Boykin

Master Tim Boykin was born in the Naval Hospital, Charleston SC, February 28, 1958, and was raised in central NC. He began his martial arts training in Isshinryu Karate under Master Mitch Kobylanski in August of 1977 in Monroe NC. The following year, he enlisted in the United States Navy, and after serving in various duty stations overseas (Yokosuka Japan, Rota Spain) was selected for the Enlisted Commissioning Program (ECP) in 1983. After graduating from the University

of Mississippi in 1985 he was commissioned an Ensign, and finally retiring at the rank of Commander in 2007. Master Boykin received his Shodan in August of 1980 from Grand Master Kobylanski, and has received several AOKA awards, including the Spirit of Isshinryu Award in 1996, the AOKA Dojo of the Year in 2004, and Outstanding Male Instructor in 2006. He was awarded his Shichi Dan in 2003, and currently is a member of the AOKA Promotion Board. Master Boykin also holds a Shichi Dan in Isshin Do Tai Go-shin Jujitsu, a Sandan in Jujitsu from the USJA, and a Black Belt in the United States Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. He holds a Master of Science Degree in Industrial Technology from Purdue University and is employed with Space Warfare Command (SPAWAR), Charleston SC. He is married and has four children.

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Please send questions, comments or contributions to any member of the Newsletter Committee to have answered in the next edition:

Sensei Dwayne Burrell Sensei Mike Fenton Sensei Bob Harris Sensei Karen Miller

NOTICE: Due to the amount of information in this edition of *The Makinvara*, the Student Spotlight section will continue in the next edition. Thank you for your patience.

Instructors: If you have a student you would like to see in the Student Spotlight, please send a digital photo of the student and with supporting narrative (not to exceed 700 words) to any member of the Newsletter Committee. We'll select the best entry to be included in the next edition of the Student Spotlight.

Naihanchi Kata, Part II

By Sensei Mike Fenton, Yondan

Understanding the history of the Isshinryu kata can provide the Isshinryu Karateka with a greater knowledge of the kata and the techniques it employs. The origins of a kata can guide us toward understanding both the application of the technique as a student and a deeper respect for the evolution of the art as an instructor.

The information within this article is a result of research done as part of a book in progress. It is to represent a comprehensive resource of data concerning the art for all Karateka. While every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy of the information, any corrections or additional details are welcome from one and all.

Naihanchi Kata

ナイハンチ

The Technique

The techniques in Naihanchi can be applied to many situations and are highly effective. The basis nature of the kata is intended for very close fighting with many grappling techniques included. There are finer points of the kata which warrant attention as they add to the greater understanding of the techniques.

Stance: Naihanchi exclusively uses Uchi Hachi Dachi, "Inner Eight Stance". Uchi Hachi Dachi is a very powerful stance which has many internal aspects to it as evidenced by it's application with Sanchin. Additionally, all transitional steps are performed extremely cautiously, and the combination kicks/hip shifting used during the transitions show the methods to generate extra power. The stance and movements are ideal for building the necessary skills for quick footwork and body-shifting.

Balance of Kata: This kata is unique in Isshinryu that all moves are performed equally on both sides of the body. Similar to the balance between the internal aspects of the kata and the external techniques the kata forces the balance of strength on both the left and

right sides.

Lateral Movement: Naihanchi is comprised entirely of movement along lateral lines. The key to understanding the importance of the technique is to understand the attackers. If you view your attack coming from the any direction except directly to the sides the movement becomes side stepping and circling movements in relation to the attacker, key motions during fighting.

Naihanchi contains effective bunkai with applications in realistic fighting situations. The techniques used are ideal for fighting at close range. Additionally, advanced bunkai also reveal many grappling applications of the techniques.

Alternate techniques

The techniques naturally vary from style to style and it is important to know the differences between the variations of the kata. By understanding the way other styles practice the kata it leads to a better understanding of possible applications to the kata.

Stance: Typically Naihanchi was done in a deep horse stance. By changing it to an Uchi Hachi Dachi stance the kata helps develop the hip motions needed to generate power. The application of the deep horse stance can be found in the previous article, an application which by the time of Isshinryu's creation had become obsolete.

Opening: The direction of the opening is commonly to the right. Isshinryu does this to the left which is the direction performed by Motobu Choki and Matsumora Kosaku. Clearly denoting the influence Motobu had on the final version of this kata included in Isshinryu.

The Origin's

As with many other kata's, the history of the kata has become lost over time. In tracing the history it is best to start with the known history and provide the likely paths that occurred prior to the known point.

Shimabuku Tatsuo originally learned Naihanchi from Kyan Chotoku and later refined it during his studies with Motobu Choki. It is important to note that the

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kata referred to as Naihanchi Shodan on Okinawa is the kata that he would have learned. The Nidan and Sandan versions were created by Itosu Anko and were not part of the curriculum taught by Kyan Chotoku.

Motobu learned Naihanchi during his study with Matsumora Kosaku, during the same time period Kyan Chotoku learned the kata from “Bushi” Matsumura Sokon. These two contemporaries both included Naihanchi in their base syllabus.

Some believe that the kata itself was brought to Okinawa by Matsumura Sokon, which is a possible scenario, however, it is easy to believe the kata’s time on Okinawa reaches further back. Given this belief, it is likely that “Karate” Sakugawa in fact taught the kata to both Matsumura and Matsumora.

The techniques of Naihanchi are clearly Chinese in origin as the techniques of Baqua and Hsing-I Kung Fu have strong similarities to the techniques. This would indicate that Sakugawa likely learned the kata from Kusanku either directly or through Yara.

One last alternative is that a visiting martial artist from China named Ason was responsible for teaching many of the karateka of Matsumura’s generation the form. This would explain the spread of the kata during that generation. While this is referenced in Funakoshi Gichin’s book, no other evidence currently exists.

By the time Shimabuku Tatsuo learned the Kata Naihanchi was a staple of Okinawan karate, being taught to all school children and in most systems of karate.

If you have corrections or comments regarding this article or any future article, please feel free to contact me directly at mike@isshinryu.ca

This article represents part of an unfinished work by Trevor Warren and Mike Fenton. Nothing would have been possible without the many resources available both on the internet and via books currently available on Okinawan Karate. Additionally, special thanks must go out to Joe Swift, his research and willingness to share was an invaluable asset.

The 2008 AOKA World Isshinryu Karate Championships

Please mark your calendars and note that we are holding the tournament in **August** instead of July. The dates are August 8th and 9th and the event will be held at the Marriott Charlotte Executive Park.

This will be the third time that Charlotte has hosted our tournament. The location is ideal because it is just off the interstate and close enough to the airport for free shuttle service. There are also many nearby activities that can be enjoyed if anyone is planning on combining the tournament with a family vacation.

On Friday, August 8th the AOKA will hold master rank black belt testing. The afternoon will feature a variety of seminars and we will have our annual awards banquet later that evening. The tournament will start Saturday morning and we have preliminary indications that this will be one of the largest events that we have hosted in years.

This is one tournament that you will not want to miss!!

Gripping Exercises

By Sensei Mark Ciprich, Yondan, Monroe, NC

One thing that is very important in Karate is a good grip. As you progress through the kata and develop more advanced bunkai you begin to understand how many locks and joint manipulations are hidden within the forms. The cornerstone of many of these techniques is the ability to seize and grasp an attacker in a sure handed fashion. I'd like to go over a few exercises designed to built grip strength and more.

Traditionally, on Okinawa, sand filled jars called Kame were used. One would hold them with tips of the fingers and the side of the thumb while doing different wrist movements. Another device consisted of a cloth bag full of small gravel suspended from a string. One would strike the bag to make it swing away and catch it in the same hand as it returned with a crushing grip.

Though Kame aren't the easiest thing to come by, metal barbells are. Choose a pair that is one-piece construction and heavy enough to give you a hard time holding. Preferably, they should have flat sides on the weighted ends. This allows you to hold them by squeezing with the tips of your fingers on the side as opposed to underneath the ends.

Simply hold them up and start doing stance training across the floor without dropping them. This shouldn't be an everyday workout at first as it could lead to tendonitis. Listen to your body and keep at it on a regular basis.

Another ubiquitous training tool is an obi. This can be used alone or even better, with a partner. As a solo training exercise simply wrap the belt around a pole or

other nonyielding object that is strong enough to support your body weight. Grab each end of the obi in a clenched fist with your fingertips on the midline of the belt. DO NOT wrap the belt around your hand. Back off until the obi is taut and your hands are about six inches in front of your abdomen. Stand in a natural stance and simple lean back while trying to keep the same posture. Don't let your hands move from in front of your abdomen. As your strength increases, you can increase the angle of lean you have. Hold the position for sixty seconds at a time.

When you have a partner, this becomes truly fun. Each person takes their obi off and folds it in half. First, work it with one obi left hand to left hand and then right hand to right. I like to stand in a kokutsu-dachi (back stance) and hold the obi's end in my rear hand in front of my belly about four inches away from my body. The trick is not to get in a tug of war but to work from a good stance while slowly and steadily exerting pressure. It helps to have someone roughly the same strength as you. After doing it one handed pick up the other obi and do one in each hand simultaneously. For those who are a little farther down the path this opens up a bunch of neat ideas. You should feel your balance and rootedness; feel power coming from your center, (hara, dan tien); and feel your partner's energy and movement through the obis. You can try it with eyes closed. Try it from other stances and explore their advantages and disadvantages.

Have fun and I hope to see you all at the tournament this year!



1. Experience the world's most unique outdoor recreation and environmental learning experience at the **U.S. National Whitewater Center**. Share

over 300 acres of woodlands along the Catawba River with Olympic caliber athletes, weekend warriors and those looking for high adventure.

www.usnwc.org



2. Once the location of the first branch of the United States Mint, the **Mint Museum of Art** is a rich and diverse resource with noted collections of American and pre Columbian art, American and European ceramics, and contemporary art and photography.

www.themintmuseums.org

3. For over half a century, **Children's Theatre of Charlotte** has been opening young minds to the wonders of live theatre, creating what one local critic called "the most technically imaginative and resourceful theatre productions in the region."

www.ctcharlotte.org

4. Join the half million people from all over the United States who visit **Discovery Place**. Walk through the

world 's largest eyeball in Activity: Eyeball Exhibit. Go deep into the heart of a tropical rain forest in Knight Rain Forest. Discovery Place is an ever changing, ever growing, cutting edge science center.

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6. **Carolina Raptor Center** is dedicated to the conservation of birds of prey through public education and the rehabilitation of injured and orphaned raptors. Tour Carolina

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www.carolinaraptorcenter.org

7. Shop 'til you drop at **Concord Mills**, one of the state's leading tourist attractions. An amazing themed complex, Concord Mills offers 200 stores, restaurants and entertainment venues including a 24screen AMC Theatres, Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World and NASCAR SpeedPark.

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8. Imagine an arts and music festival highlighting emerging local artists, children's area, music stages and fun for the entire family! **Art & Soul of South End** showcases the Original Block Party, Avenue of the Arts, the Children's Arts Festival and Battle of the Bands.

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9. If you love flowers, you're not going to want to miss this. Named one of the nation's "20 Great Gardens" in HGTV's popular book, *Flower Gardening*, **Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden** features 110 acres of themed gardens, a dozen sparkling fountains, a spectacular Visitor Pavilion and nine distinctly themed gardens.

www.dsbgo.org

10. Tickle your funny bone at **The Comedy Zone**, located in Charlotte's north end entertainment district.

www.thecomedyzone.net