



American Okinawan Karate Association Newsletter



VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: WWW.AOKA.ORG

2007 AOKA World Isshinryu Championships Update

December 2006

The 2007 AOKA World Isshinryu Karate Championships and Awards Banquet will be held on July 6th & 7th at the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort in Lincolnshire, IL. The Marriott is a fantastic setting and offers many activities from golf to swimming to beach volleyball. There is even a Broadway style theatre on site. Many great attractions are in the area including Six Flags, Gurnee Mills Outlet Center, and the Renaissance Faire and of course, downtown Chicago's lake front. Stay a few extra days and make a mini vacation out of it!

Events:

Thursday July 5th, 2007

AOKA Executive Board Meetings
AOKA Member Workout (5pm to 7pm)

Friday July 6th, 2007

Black Belt Testing (9am to noon) (Must be pre-approved)
Seminar #1 (noon to 1pm) (free to current AOKA members)
Seminar #2 (1:15pm to 2:15pm) (free to current AOKA members)
Seminar #3 (2:30pm to 3:30pm) (free to current AOKA members)
Seminar #4 (3:45pm to 4:45pm) (free to current AOKA members)
Awards Banquet (6pm social hour – dinner & awards 7pm to 9pm)

Saturday July 7th

Masters Kata & Weapons (9am Sharp!)
Tournament begins (10am)

Here are some new items for the event:

You can register for the hotel and receive the **special AOKA rate** by going to: <http://cwp.marriott.com/chiln/aokakaratecompetition/> This will ensure you get the discounted rate negotiated for the tournament, but **you must register by June 14, 2007!**

We are adding several Masters Divisions for 6th Dans and up. The Masters Kata and Masters Weapons will take place at 9:00am. These are combined men and women. Masters Kumite will take place immediately before the Grand Champion Kumite fights. A minimum of five (5) participants must be pre-registered by June 14, 2006 in order to conduct the divisions.

We are also adding Black Belt Team Fighting Competition. There will be separate team divisions for men and women. Team (5 members per team) will consist of **ONLY BLACK BELTS** and the fee per team will be \$100. We must have a minimum of four (4) teams pre-registered by June 14, 2007 in order to conduct the division. Only Isshinryu participants are allowed to compete in the tournament.

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At the Awards Banquet on Friday, July 6th, there will be a special remembrance for **Master Stephen Armstrong**. We hope you will be able to attend.

The **AOKA Seminars** will be free to all current AOKA members that **pre-register** for the seminars. Non-AOKA members will be charged \$25 if they pre-register for the seminars. At the door admittance will be limited to available space and will cost current AOKA members \$20. Non-members will be charged \$45 for at the door registration for the seminars, provided that space is available.

Banquet tickets, competition and spectator admissions may be purchased at www.aoka.org. Shortly, team registration and seminar registration will be open. For questions, contact Master Young at steve.young@syiks.com.

Upcoming Events

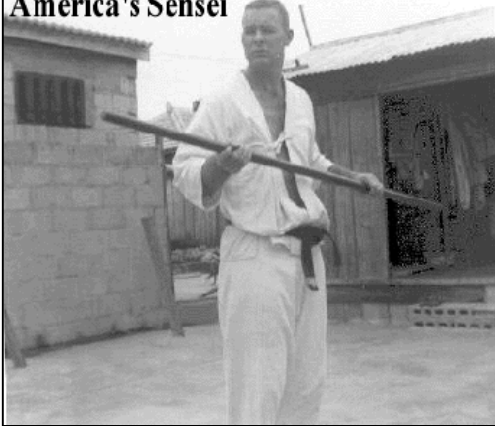
Date	Location	Event	Contact Info
16 Dec 06	Princeton, Ill	AOKA Workout	Sensei Cliff Morse at senseimorse@verizon.net .
14 April 07	Knoxville, TN	The Harold Long Memorial Tournament and Shiai	Click here for details or Visit: http://www.steelhanddojo.com/long.htm for details
5 May 07	King George, VA	Fourth Annual King George Isshin Ryu Open Championships	Click here for details or Visit: http://www.bohans-family.com/Events/hovey/hovey.pdf for details
28-30 Jun 07	Princeton, NJ	2007 IWKA World Championships	Click here for details or contact Master John Hughes, (908) 852-5855; email: karatedo@goes.com http://www.isshin-ryu.com/iwka_2007.htm for details
6-7 Jul 07	Lincolnshire, Ill	2007 AOKA World Championships and Award Banquet	Visit AOKA web site for additional information as it becomes available.
27-28 July 07	Gatlinburg, TN	2007 IHOF Awards Banquet & Karate Tournament	Visit: IHOF website or contact Sensei McGhee by email: tmcghee@ihof.us
28-29 Sept 07	Bayonne, NJ	Nagle's AOKA Open Karate Championship and Banquet	Click here for details or Visit: http://eventful.com/events/E0-001-001747237-4 for more details.

In Memory of Master Stephen Harry Armstrong

By Grand Master Stephen Young

I first met Master Armstrong many years ago. I had communicated with him via letters and telephone calls, but had only met him for the first time in Nashville, TN at the AOKA Grand Nationals. I attended a seminar with several of my fellow karateka at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. There I met Masters Armstrong, Lizotte and Adams at the AOKA seminar in a conference room at the hotel.

**Steve Armstrong
America's Sensei**



Upon entering the seminar I quickly found myself to be out of place, wearing one of the only black gi in the room. Although treated cordially, I really felt that I had broken some

terrible rule. Once the seminar started, I was asked by Master Armstrong to assist with a kata application that involved a take down. I was certain that I was going to suffer! Master Armstrong loomed above me and I was ready for the worst when he said to me, "Steve, I want you to take me down to the floor to show everyone how this works." He wanted me to take HIM down.

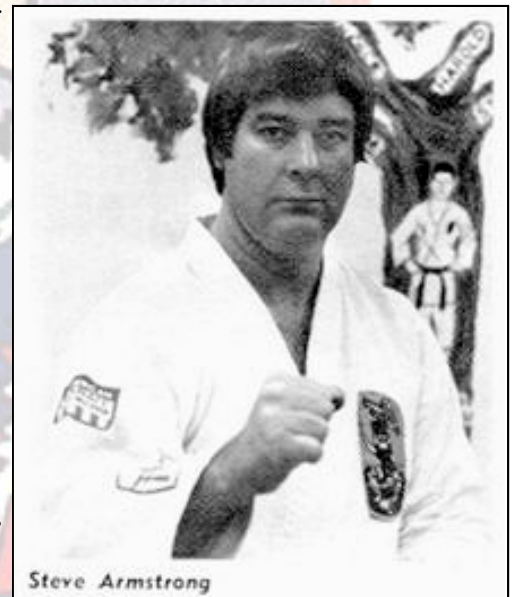
I had a great opportunity to talk with Master Armstrong at the Nashville event, and it was the beginning of a great relationship. I then scheduled a trip out to his dojo in Tacoma and the rest is history. Over the next 20 to 30 years, Master Armstrong and I had many opportunities to meet and for me to learn from him. In one trip to Tacoma he allowed me to film him doing the first 10 kata. He stayed at the dojo and worked with me an entire Sunday. On another trip when he visited me in the Chicago area, he and I worked at one of my schools for 11 hours straight. Again, I was able to film some of the basics and some of the kata. Additionally, he shared with me his knowledge of Master Tatsuo Shimabuku, Isshinryu Karate and what it meant to be a leader. He always made me feel very special and inspired me to continue training and learning.

Sadly, as Master Armstrong's health deteriorated over the past years, he lost much of his memory. The last time I telephone him at the facility he was confined to, he no longer remembered my wife (Kay) and I. I could tell this was difficult for him, so we began to send cards and letters with pictures in hopes of jogging his memory.

Master Armstrong recently passed away and Isshinryu Karate, martial arts in general and the world lost a great individual. I am sure he has gone to a better place and I will always remember his generosity, patience and friendship.

For those that never had the chance to know him, I encourage you to read about him and talk to others that did know him. As with anyone there will be good stories and bad, but he was always willing to help anyone that wanted to learn. He also was primarily responsible for bringing the AOKA back to the USA and growing it throughout the country. He authored some of the first publications on Isshinryu Karate including Seisan Kata, Seiuchin Kata, Naihanchi Kata and Wansu Kata. He, along with Jay Alevison, also authored Isshinryu Karate – The One Heart Method.

We owe Master Armstrong a great deal for his years of dedication and leadership in Isshinryu Karate. I know he would want Isshinryu Karate to grow and to prosper. On behalf of the American Okinawan Karate Association, myself, and those that had the privilege of knowing Master Armstrong, we will miss you, always remember you and thank you for everything you have done.



Master's Spotlight

In the next edition of the AOKA newsletter we will be continuing the question and answer section by allowing all members of the AOKA to pose questions directly to the board of directors either as a whole or of the individuals on the board. All questions are welcome whether they be requests for personal opinions, questions about the individuals' training (either as students or currently) or questions on technique.

Our next newsletter will profile the current Chairman and CEO of the AOKA 9th Degree Grand Master Steve Young.

Grand Master Steve Young began training in 1967. After receiving his black belt in both Isshinryu and Shotokan, he shifted his focus to be entirely on Isshinryu. Serving as an ambassador of the martial arts he was very active in the tournament scene as well as instructing students. After college he relocated to the Chicago area and began training with Grand Master Stephen Armstrong and later Grand Master Lewis Lizotte and Grand Master Willie Adams.

He continues to actively teach and learn and is active in Okinawan Weaponry with Master Peter Carbone, where he serves as Illinois State Direc-



tor for the Weapons Connection Society. Master Young also teaches a small class at the Fox Valley Park District. His main dojo is located in Aurora, IL and his long time student Master Keith Smith in charge of the school. Grand Master Young has been recognized repeatedly through his martial arts career including the award for "Spirit of Isshinryu" and induction into the Isshinryu Hall of Fame.

Grand Master Young currently resides in Wheaton, IL and is married with two children, Jennifer and Joseph. Jennifer, Joseph and his wife Kay are all Black belts.

To submit your questions, please e-mail them directly to Mike Fenton at aokanewsletter@isshinryu.ca or to any member of the newsletter committee. Remember, ALL questions are welcome from ALL ranks, don't be shy!

For example:

- What's your favorite kata—hand and weapon and why?
- Why did you choose Isshinryu to follow? There are so many from which to choose!
- Do you have ranking in another martial art?

- How did you get started in karate?

Here's your chance to ask questions!

The Western Region has begun discussions with instructors about holding an Isshinryu Gasshuku (intensive training camp) next August. This would be intended to draw together our Isshinryu community which is spread thinly across several states and to offer additional training opportunities for all of us.

Regardless of affiliation, if you are interested in a weekend of training in Denver next August contact me so I can begin to get an idea of the level of interest in this event?

Thanks,

John Holwager, AOKA Western Regional Representative, John@AmericanIsshinryuKarate.com

Yudansha Promotions



Dwayne A. Burrell, Yondan, Midwest School of Isshinryu Karate, Aurora, IL
Lori Challans, Yondan, Chikara Dojo - Mady's Karate Schools, Windsor, Ontario
Bill Chappus, Yondan, Chikara Dojo - Mady's Karate Schools, Windsor, Ontario
Mark Ciprich, Yondan, Carolina Isshin Ryu Academy, Monroe, NC
Buzz Cox, Yondan, West-Man Isshinryu Karate-Brandon, Manitoba
Bob Harris, Yondan, Carolina Isshin Ryu Academy, Wetumpka, AL
Matt Jordan, Sandan, Chikara Dojo - Mady's Karate Schools, Windsor, Ontario
Melissa Pinazza, Sandan, Chikara Dojo - Mady's Karate Schools, Windsor, Ontario
Kathy Furlong, Nidan, Chikara Dojo - Mady's Karate Schools, Windsor, Ontario
LeeAnne Gloor, Nidan, West-Man Isshinryu Karate, Brandon, Manitoba
Kate Mendez Johnson, Nidan, Tradition Karate, New Hartford, CT
Karen Miller, Nidan, Midwest School of Isshinryu Karate, Aurora, IL
Yvone Reismiere, Nidan, West-Man Isshinryu Karate, Brandon, Manitoba
Catherine Tsagarakis, Nidan, West-Man Isshinryu Karate -Brandon, Manitoba
Till Kuendiger, Shodan, Toshikai Dojo - Ottawa, Ontario
Jessica Schroeder, Shodan, Morse School of Isshinryu Karate, Princeton, IL
Wayne Smith, Shodan, West-Man Isshinryu Karate, Brandon, Manitoba

Resistance is Futile

By John English, New Orleans, LA

I realize that I have not been on the path very long (two years), but I would like to share an observation that I have seen repeated too many times whenever a new student arrives that has "something to prove". Within the first few classes, the Sensei will call upon the new student to act as the Uke. This individual will inevitably try to resist the demonstration with all his might and even try to counter the Sensei's technique. I am always amazed and not sure why he does this. Even though the best learned lessons are those we learn ourselves, my hope is that this type of student reads this article before bowing into dojo.

First and foremost this is fundamentally rude, disrespectful, and against the principles of Karate. The Dojo is a place of learning, not a tournament hall. It is a place where the student tests himself not others, especially the Sensei. The Sensei has worked very hard to earn his position and to put him/her in a position that is definitely awkward, humiliating (possibly to the Sensei but most likely to you) and potentially dangerous is wrong. There is a time where we do test ourselves by challenging others, but it is a time that we must get to in due course. We must learn enough to keep ourselves and other safe. We must establish a mutual respect and concern for each other. We must come together as a class.

Second, you must realize that this is not an accurate simulation of reality. The Sensei is teaching you part of a series of techniques. You have the luxury of coming into the middle of the conversation. For example, let's just say the sensei is demonstrating a joint manipulation. Well, I am sure that the Sensei would have softened you up a bit before moving into a control technique. You would not be as fresh as you think. Also, the speed and force applied would be multiplied 10 fold if this were reality. The Sensei governs himself because the safety of his students is paramount. Another false advantage that you have is that you have fore knowledge of what technique will be applied. Finally, if you are truly adept at escaping a particular technique, congratulations, but the Sensei would shift to another approach. One of the fundamental tenants that we learn is to be flexible and if something is not working move to another approach/technique. "The body should be able to change direction at any time."

The next point of contention is that while you are trying to prove your manhood, you are robbing precious time away from the other students. We have not sacrificed our time and paid our tuition to see you wrestle with the Sensei. A simple 5 second demonstration may turn into a 2 minute kumite because of your misguided intentions. The time spent with the Sensei should be valued and appreciated. To abuse this time with your own selfish reasons is shameful and unfair to the rest of the class. Once the again, the Sensei is teaching the class, not just you.

Another consequence of your foolish action is that you may be jeopardizing the faith of the other students have in the Sensei. Believing in your Sensei to be the master of his craft motivates us to work to attain his ranking. Knowing without any doubt that the Sensei will not harm you or let others harm you is critical to your training. Who are you to threaten my belief in my Sensei? Now granted, I have been with my Sensei for over 6 months and I seen first hand the level in his skill and believe in him. But what if I was a new student and I witnessed you evade the Sensei demonstration. You would have unjustly strained the special relationship between the Sensei and the student that is fundamental to the learning process.

My last point that I need to make is that it could possibly be dangerous to you. When you inappropriately challenge the Sensei, you put him in a very awkward position. Step into his shoes for a moment. He is probably first feeling a little angry, maybe frustrated and possibly embarrassed. He doesn't want to lose face with his students. He wants to prove that his technique works even against an unwilling opponent. Plus you probably have inadvertently tapped into his competitive and/or combative nature. He has a very hard decision to make. Does he increase the applied force that could possible hurt you? Does he switch to another technique to put you into submission, which will also be painful? Or does he stop what he is doing? He knows that everyone is watching to see what he will do. At this point I hope for your safety that either you are truly better than the Sensei or that the Sensei is a professional.

(Continued on page 7)

My Perspective of the Importance of Isshin-Ryu

By Erin Sharp Campbell, Charlotte, NC

At this point in my training, Isshin-Ryu's importance is best understood in the context of the dojo and within my personal life. Training began with an emphasis on mastering the physical aspects of fitness, hand and foot techniques, self-defense, kumite and kata. By committing myself to these things I developed a deeper understanding of physical strengths and weaknesses, as well as, characteristics of my personality and how they affect me as a karate-ka and person.

Through practice I began to improve the weaknesses of timidity, constant self-talk, expectation, etc. that impacted my physical and mental ability to maintain balance and grow. By learning to let go and relax physically and mentally I began to have more success when working to deepen my focus and balance. As a result, a better understanding of distance, timing, and reading the signs of my opponent started to develop.

Coupling pregnancy with Isshin-Ryu has been a very enlightening experience. It has really challenged me to bring my expectations in line with new physical realities/limitations. With the help of observations and guidance from Sensei I have begun to accept these changes and to adapt my mindset to meet the new challenges. Since adaptation on this scale comes along only a few times in life, I have found my ability to develop a new strategy and apply it both laborious and time consuming. However, when

compared with the time and emotion spent transitioning through previous "big" events in my life; I can say I am more adaptable now than before as I have managed to adapt more quickly to maintain balance among the many roles of my life.

After reading "Living the Martial Way" I now see that the study of Isshin-Ryu has put me on a path of not only deeper personal understanding and balance, but of learning to be an honorable person. I have always worked to be a good "citizen", but had never considered what it meant to live "honorably" or like a warrior. Filtering decisions through the ideals of justice, courage, and obligation provide a very clear way of assessing my own behaviors and those of the people around me.

Each time I consider the lessons learned in class and through readings it re-enforces my belief that studying Isshin-Ryu is a life long journey of mental and physical development to achieve a connection of mind and body and to develop a sense of wholeness and peace with myself and the people and world around me. I have always worked to improve myself. With Isshin-Ryu there are limitless opportunities to make me a better person in all the roles of my life (individual, wife, mother, daughter, friend, karate-ka, and professional). Through structured physical and mental exercises I've begun to glimpse the powerful life changing affects of having a heart and mind that are one.

(Continued from page 6) - Resistance Is Futile

I am not saying that to possess the feeling of wanting to win every time is wrong. If we were ever in situation where we had to use our Karate, this mindset is essential for survival. But there is a time and place for everything. There will come a time when you do face-off with the Sensei and he will want you to try your utmost to defeat him. And if you do, your Sensei has done his job well, until then.... Resistance is Futile.

Contest!

How would you like to participate in the 2007 AOKA Awards Banquet **or** Tournament for free? We are having two contests: name this newsletter **and** a contest to design the banner of the newsletter!

How it works. Submit your idea for the name of the newsletter by email to unan-te@elmoresr.com (One person, one entry). Instead of having *AOKA Newsletter*, it could be called *The Makiwara* or *The Fighting Times*. A committee will select the winner and two runners up. The results will be announced in our next newsletter! The remaining entries will be announced in the next newsletter.

- Winner: free tournament competition – kata, kumite and sparring **or** free admission to banquet.
- 2nd place: two level tournament upgrade. Pay for one event, but get two events free.
- 3rd place: one level tournament upgrade. Pay for two events, but get one event free.

For those of you who are more graphically inclined, we have a similar contest for you! The masthead for the newsletter (the masthead is the top of the first page.) needs a special touch. Submit your

best drawing for the masthead by email to unan-te@elmoresr.com (One person, one entry). The drawing must fit in a 7" x 1 1/8" area. A committee will select the winner and two runners up. The results will be used in our next newsletter!

- Winner: free tournament competition – kata, kumite and sparring **or** free admission to banquet.
- 2nd place: two level tournament upgrade. Pay for one event but get two events free.
- 3rd place: one level tournament upgrade. Pay for two events but get one event free.

Keep in mind the masthead design should be focused on the martial arts. It wouldn't look right to have butterflies and flowers for a design and the name of the newsletter called *The Dragon's Breath*. Other designs submitted will be viewed at the 2007 AOKA Tournament.

For those without email, send your entry by mail: AOKA Contest, 125 Athenian Court, Wetumpka, AL 36093. Remember, this is your newsletter. Your participation matters. You must be a member of the AOKA to participate in the above contests

What's Happening in Illinois!

On December 16th 2006, Illinois State Representative Sensei Cliff Morse is sponsoring a 2-hour educational workout at his dojo in Princeton Illinois from 10 am to 12 pm.

This workout will be consisting of different workshops. The first workshop is a Black Belt workshop. Grandmaster Steve Young will be instructing black belts on fundamental drills, kata, and bunkai.

The second workshop will consist of all Kyu Ranks. Master Keith Smith will be instructing the Kyu ranks on fundamental drills, kata, and bunkai.

The Illinois State Representative Sensei Cliff Morse will be sponsoring these AOKA educational workouts approximately every three months at various AOKA dojos in the Illinois area.

If you are interested in hosting or instructing at an AOKA educational workout please feel free to contact Illinois State Representative Sensei Cliff Morse at senseimorse@msoi.net

Women's Self-Defense Expo

On October 21st 2006, the Morse School of Isshinryu hosted a Women's Self-Defense Expo for 60 participating women from ages 8 to 80. These women were given the opportunity to learn basic self-defense concepts from featured speaker: Sensei Diane Ortenzio-Cooling.

Sensei Ortenzio-Cooling taught the 60 participants in two different sessions during the day. The morning session was learning basic striking techniques as well as personal safety ideas.

During the afternoon session Sensei Ortenzio Cooling had the participants test out their skills they learned in the morning session against Sensei Cliff Morse and Mr. Jon Hassler who were wearing full contact body suits.

Sensei Morse and Mr. Hassler would throw various attacks at the women. All 60 women participated in the physical aspect of this seminar.

Also during the Expo, the Morse School of Isshinryu sponsored a lunch. During the lunch and several breaks there were 4 keynote speakers from various local governments, and counseling businesses. These speakers spoke for approximately 15 to 20 minutes on self-defense laws, date rape and date rape drugs, mind empowerment, and internet safety.

The Morse School of Isshinryu would like to thank all of the sponsors for making this event a huge success.



The AOKA Board of Directors has decided to have a tribute to the late Grand Master Steve Armstrong at the 2007 AOKA tournament.

If you have pictures, articles or other interesting information to share, please send the information to: Unan-te@elmore.rr.com.

Dojo Start Up

By Bob Harris, Yondan

Last year, my Sensei asked me to leave the dojo. It was time for me to start my own dojo. In order to continue my martial arts training, I had to teach without his watchful eye monitoring all my teaching methods. He said I had to make mistakes and learn from them. The purpose of this article is to outline some of the steps I found necessary in starting my own dojo.

Face it; we live in a society where we fear litigation. Even if the fault is not caused by you, someone will attempt to find fault and hold you financially accountable. As a martial arts instructor, you must have some means to protect yourself from the possibility of being sued. When you think about it, insurance is quite a bargain. Let's say your premium is \$850 for the year. In April, a student is injured during class, and the parents sue you for \$1 million. The case goes to court and the jury awards the child \$750,000. If you didn't have insurance, you'd have to pay the \$750,000. Which would you rather pay: \$850 in premium or \$750,000 in damages? I felt having an insurance policy was a good thing. Cost: varies upon coverage. Policies range from \$500.00 - \$1,000.00.

Do you gamble? If you don't claim the income received from teaching martial arts, you are gambling the IRS won't audit your records or investigate your activities. This is one form of gambling I don't do. I decided to run my dojo as a business. I obtained a tax ID from the IRS to operate my dojo as a sole proprietor. There are various types of businesses. You should seek professional advice on which type of business will be to your advantage. To get a business tax ID - Cost: Free!

Advantages:

- Having a business tax ID gives me a better status than as an individual when dealing with another business.
- Businesses often lose money. If my business loses money, it becomes a tax right off on my personal income tax.
- Using a business tax ID is not using my social security number. With the amount of identity theft prevalent I felt this was a prudent action. Most records are available for public inspection.

My martial arts activities are paid by my business and reduce my tax liability. Such as tournament

fees, seminars, mileage, dues, hotel, replacement uniforms, training supplies and equipment, banquet tickets, and association dues. (It also keeps my wife happy since I don't have to ask if I can buy a new book or martial arts DVD using our personal money.)

Disadvantages:

- Businesses often earn money as well. I must report my business income with my personal income filing.
- I have to keep records of all my transactions.

If you want to protect your business name to keep others from using it, you'll have to register the name of your business - unless you don't mind having another dojo in the same town to using your school name. Imagine running a dojo for a year and never having registered the dojo name. A new guy opens a dojo using your business name and you get a notice in the mail stating you are infringing on the other business and must change your dojo name! Each State has different rules as to how you register your business. In the State I established my dojo, the State delegates the management of business names to the local level. I visited the County Register of Deeds to obtain the necessary forms and pay for the business name. Cost: \$45.00.

Additionally, you may need to get a business license. A business license gives you permission to operate your business in a given location. Many cities require business operating inside city limits to have a business license. Cost \$10.00.

Another factor is where will you teach? Are you teaching in a local YMCA or community education center? How much rent do you pay? What is your income? Do you have your own building? Are you teaching in the garage of your home? Each has advantages and disadvantages. You'll have to decide what is best for you and your students.

The new dojo turned out to be a great success. I rewarded those that helped me start up the dojo by paying for admission to the tournament and banquet meals. Most of the income was put back into the dojo to keep my expenses high and my income low.

There were many other things I had to do to keep the program active and growing - making business cards, conducting demonstrations, public announcement of student achievements/promotions, offering self defense classes and more. I now have a better appreciation of what it takes to run a dojo - off the mat. Sensei, thank you for kicking me out of the dojo. I've learned a lot and will continue to learn more.

The future of the AOKA is growth. The only way to grow is to have instructors teaching and enrolling

members into the AOKA. If you are a Sandan or higher and do not have your own dojo with ten or more students, then you are not contributing to the growth of the AOKA. It's time to start your own dojo.

(Disclaimer: The thoughts and opinions expressed in this article are not to be used to determine how you should start up your dojo as a business. Business practices vary between each State with some localities having special requirements. See a tax advisor for requirements in your area.)

China Trip

By Master John Holwager

Recently, Mary and I had a rather unique opportunity, to visit and train in China as part of a TaiChi based group.

The tour was organized by Jinheng Li, a WuShu Master currently living in the Phoenix area. Most probably have not heard of Jinheng Li, but he was once very well known as a champion in China. Most of us have heard of Jet Li, and Jinheng was his senior and training partner from the time when Jet was four and Jinheng was six. They came up through the primary school system together in Beijing and with that trained together four - five hours per day six days per week as they grew to adulthood. This gentleman organized the tour for us and accompanied us in a great opportunity to learn more about China, Chinese culture and of course the Chinese martial arts.

Those who know me know I believe that in order to fully learn and appreciate the Asian Martial Arts it is essential to understand the history and culture they come from. This trip provided everything I had hoped for in a short glimpse into China.

Sixteen of us came together in Los Angeles for our flight to Beijing on September 21st, each with varied martial arts experience.

The first three days were dedicated to martial arts practice. Our instruction was provided through Wu Binh, a WuShu Master who has been responsible for overseeing Primary School martial arts instruction in Beijing for several decades. Wu Binh selected from his best instructors three people to provide our instruction in Hsing-i, Bagua, TaiChi and for some of the younger people in our group, Northern Long Fist. The instruction was intense and wonderful. I was repeatedly

amazed at the similarity between especially the Hsing-i and our Isshinryu (a great deal of similarity). For those who have never tried TaiChi, I think you'd be amazed at how it can help your Isshinryu - the slow fluid movement is a great way to isolate different parts of the body and learn to focus that movement into your techniques. And, Bagua - I would like to have more time to explore this art, for learning fluid movement I believe there is nothing to compare.

The next several days we got to explore different sites. Around Beijing we visited The Forbidden City (the former imperial palace) and the Great Wall. What can I say about both of these sites, Wow, it was incredible. I would gladly have spent weeks exploring both of these locations and there were so many others we didn't get to. We did fly down to Henan Province for a couple days where we got to visit the Shaolin Temple and Chen Village (the birthplace of TaiChi).

Over the years, I have witnessed many martial arts demonstrations, but I have to say some of the demonstrations of power and skill demonstrated by the Shaolin Monks is beyond comparison. And the TaiChi demonstrated, even by small children, in Chen Village was unbelievable.

The trip ended after nine days, not nearly long enough, but an unforgettable experience none the less.

Let me finish by encouraging any who may have opportunities to explore Asia to never pass up the opportunity. Mary and I have been fortunate to have opportunities to visit Japan, Okinawa and now China - each has added greater understanding and new ways of thinking to our Isshinryu.

AOKA Website Update

AOKA Website Committee

With the recent appointment of a AOKA Web Committee, the members have been working diligently to design a new site that will better serve the needs of the AOKA members. While the temporary site is currently up, we would like to provide a glimpse of the new features you can expect to see in early 2007 when the updated site goes online.

1. The new site will be a fully community based site. Members of the AOKA will be able to communicate with each other to organize events and share information.

2. A vast expansion of the content on the site. The content on the site will be updated regularly and will be divided into segments targeted at specific ranks. Everyone from white belt to 8th Degree Black belt will find information specifically targeted for them on the site.

3. New Multimedia Material. As the site expands the content will evolve to both articles as well as

multimedia materials. The first step will be static content that is prepared and eventually supporting live streaming of instructional material with interactive elements.

4. Calendar of Events. The site will have an up-to-date calendar of events for all locations in the AOKA community with events submitted by members.

5. Automatic Notifications. The new site will allow members to register for important news updates allowing them to receive in their e-mail updates as important news is released.

The goal of the AOKA Web Committee is to provide a highly functional website that will provide information and a personal connection between members in an environment that is safe for members of all ages to enjoy.

Seisan—Part I

By 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.

late as Thirteen Fists, Thirteen Hands and Thirteen Steps. These names denote the application or deeper understanding of the techniques. The most readily used interpretation of the thirteen in the kata name are:

1. Thirteen Attackers
2. Thirteen Breathes – Can also refer to attackers

Thirteen Steps / Positions in the kata

These of course when understood properly from a self defense point of view all become identical in nature. With each Attack/Breathe/Position the kata teaches everything that is required to stop an attacker.

Seisan Kata

十三

Thirteen Steps

十三步

Thirteen Hands

十三手

Thirteen Fists

十三拳

The Name

Seisan can be translated directly as the number thirteen as marked by the most commonly used Kanji above. Other possible Kanji for Seisan trans-

The Myth's

Seisan has two basic myths associated with its history and technique. The first myth is common to many Isshinryu schools in that Seisan was a black belt kata prior to it's inclusion in Isshinryu. While it was not the first kata taught in many styles, it consistently appears early in the styles that do teach it. The confusion most likely arises from the Okinawan traditional katas of the Pinan (Heian in Shotokan) and their labeling of Shodan through Godan. These kata's replace what we would consider are basics and are strictly techniques corresponding to the level of the Isshinryu basics. The Shodan must be thought of as 1st level, and not associated with the corresponding rank.

Additionally, the history of these Kata's on Okinawa is relatively short as their practice began largely when Karate moved into the school system as they were ideal to begin with when Karate was instituted as a physical education program. However, due to their presence in school, the majority of Karateka on Okinawa would learn these kata first.

The second myth is that of a mysterious master Seisan or Seishan. The origin of this myth is unknown

however, there does not appear to be any historical evidence to suggest that a person by the name of Seisan ever existed.

I sincerely hope that you enjoyed reading this. The next article will continue the background of Seisan with the bulk of the article primarily on the kata's origins focusing specifically on the path the kata took on it's way to Shimabuku Tatsuo and it's incorporation into Isshinryu Kata. If you have corrections or comments regarding this article or any future article, please feel free to contact me directly.

Mike Fenton
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 Morse School of Isshinryu hosted an Isshinryu Seminar in Princeton, Illinois on October 22nd 2006. This seminar featured Grandmaster Toby Cooling founder of the Order of Isshinryu.

During the Morning session Grandmaster Cooling taught Bo and Sai techniques as well as Bo-Bo kumite. Grandmaster Cooling also talked about his travels to Okinawa training with Isshinryu Founder Grandmaster Tatsuo Shimabuku.

During the afternoon session, Grandmaster Cooling taught various takedowns and pain compliance holds from Isshinryu katas.

There were approximately 30 students at the seminar coming from AOKA and Non-AOKA dojos from all over Illinois and Missouri.

Isshinryu Against The World

by Mike Fenton, Yondan

This November saw two Canadian Isshinryu girls demonstrate the skill and dedication of all Isshinryu by competing in two separate World Championships and distinguishing themselves.

Hayley Tennier of Thunder Bay, Ontario first won the Canadian Championships and then traveled to Spain and eventually earning a Gold Medal for Canada in the WKA World Championships in continuous fighting.

Kaitlyn Brown of Windsor, Ontario also a regular winner of competitions (and this years AOKA Outstanding Female Black Belt under 18, and the Isshinryu Hall of Fame Young Female of the Year AND Junior Female Competitor of the year), traveled to Florida to compete in the Cosmopolitan Hall of Fame World Championships. To say that she did well is a vast understatement. Kaitlyn won first place in 5 events, 2 grand championships and was named as the most dedicated martial artist of the year. Please join me in congratulating these fine martial artists.

Cosmopolitan Hall of Fame World Championship

Kaitlyn Brown—Chikara Dojo—Mady's Karate Schools—Windsor, ON

1st Point Fighting
 1st Traditional Weapons (Male & Female)
 1st Full Contact Combat Weapons (Male & Female)
 1st Full Contact Fighting
 1st Continuous Fighting
 2nd Open Weapons (Male & Female)
 2nd Grappling (Kaitlyn was the only female competitor)
 2nd Submission Grappling
 3rd Traditional Kata
 Grand Champion Kumite
 Grand Champion Chambra (Male & Female)
 Also awarded Most Dedicated Martial Artist of the Year

WKA World Championships—Spain

Hailey Tennier—Kokoro Dojo—Thunder Bay, ON
 Gold Medal—Continuous Fighting



Kaitlyn Brown posing with trophies

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Sensei Fierro teaches many Attack Prevention seminars at her dojo and elsewhere. Check the website below for highlights from some of these seminars. A complete Attack Prevention workshop tape or DVD is also available through Isshinryu Productions.

<http://www.members.aol.com/marilyn774/shows.html>

American Okinawan Karate Association Memberships may be obtained by going to www.sign-up-site.com.

Grand Master Stephen Armstrong DVD's

- **Seisan Kata** **\$19.95**
- **Seiuchin Kata** **\$19.95**
- **Naihanchi Kata** **\$19.95**
- **Wansu Kata** **\$19.95**
- **Chinto Kata** **\$19.95**
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