



The Canadian Isshinryu Way Everything Karate & Kobudo

Isshinryu Canada

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February 2014

A Decade of the Way

This issues marks the 10th year of the Canadian Isshinryu Way.

Lots has changed in the newsletter over that time, both stylistically and the content. Initially, it was focused on just a few clubs in Canada, but it quickly grew to include Dojo's around the world.

I'd like to thank everyone for all the articles, and submissions over the years. I'm aware that in my own Dojo, other than the black belts, the newsletter has been around providing ideas and training tips longer than they've been involved.

I suspect that's the case in many Dojo. I'd be very happy to hear from those who try out the challenges and improve their Karate by both hard training and reading the newsletter.

It's also been quite some time since we profiled any Masters, Sensei or Students. For some people, it's likely

time to do another, lots can change over time so sharing your current motivations may help others. For others, it's a new opportunity to help motivate others.

Keep up the training, send in your articles and we'll be celebrating 20 years of the newsletter before we know it!

Essential Isshinryu is available!

For more information on the first Canadian Isshinryu book, visit www.essentialissheinryu.com!

ATTENTION NEEDED!

Do you know of someone great in Isshinryu? If so, please e-mail Sen-sei@issheinryu.ca with the contact details to be profiled in future newsletters.

Upcoming Events

Seminars

March 1st, Women's Self Defense Seminar
Charleston Air Force Base

May 16-18th, Isshinryu Karate Expo,
Thunder Bay, ON

Tournaments

February 28th, Friday Night Open, Thunder Bay, ON

July 25-26th, Isshinryu Hall of Fame—
Gatlinburg, TN

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Being a Karateka isn't a sprint, train for life!



The Codes of Isshinryu

The Codes of Isshinryu are a key set of guiding principles that are largely shared across Okinawan Karate and other Asian martial arts.

I believe there is great value in understanding the principles and making a sincere attempt to apply them both in your Karate training and daily life.

In order to help you appreciate the values they present, this article will focus on the first two codes, while future articles will explain the importance of subsequent codes.

The first two codes

To be clear, the codes as they exist in Isshinryu were introduced by Shimabuku Tatsuo Sensei and were modified slightly from their original versions to match his understanding of them.

The first two codes of Isshinryu are typically the most difficult to understand. The remaining codes are all relatively easily translatable to your Karate training, however, these two can be more elusive in their application.

#1 A person's heart is the same as Heaven and Earth.

In the Japanese culture there is a single character (or word) that represents both heart and mind. In the context of this code, the heart isn't meant to be your organ that pumps blood throughout your body, but instead your spirit, or your meaningful intentions of the situation.

Heart should be taken as a reference to the center, in contrast with the body. By maintaining a peaceful and tranquil nirvana internally, the external body is able to act with clarity and reason. This balance is important in all aspects of life as it is in martial arts training where hesitations and misinterpretations can result in injuries or worse.

Making the right decision at the right time is my simplest understanding of this code, the ability to separate the situation you are in from the true proper solution is an important skill to have and understand.

#2 The blood circulating is similar to the Moon and the Sun.

This code concerns itself with cycles. There are many literal cycles of which we are affected every day. The day is a cycle, the season's cycle, the year is a cycle, the tides going in and out are a cycle, the blood circulating through the body, etc. There are also quite a few religions and philosophies which consider the cycle an important element. The concept of karma is cyclic in nature (what goes around, comes around), as well, the idea of birth, death and rebirth is a cycle. As well, most cycles are inescapable, we can not stop the cycling of the days any more then we could stop our own blood circulating (while continuing to exist at any rate).

Recognizing the many cycles that apply to you at any moment can be a difficult task, in your active martial arts training there are three that I think apply most often.

- 1) Breathing—Your breath in and out happens on a variable cycle, the harder you work, the more you breath, at the same time, you want to breath out when striking or getting stuck.. Any fighting needs to be timed with the breath.
- 2) Pulse—Your heart rate is another variable cycle, it rises and falls with your actions. Being aware of it and able to calm yourself to keep it balanced can help you to maintain your energy and clear head.
- 3) Body Position—When fighting we are always moving, even if just slightly. Any backwards movement needs to be countered with a forward movement to maintain balance. Noticing this small movements whether it's our whole body or how we recover our hands from a technique allows us to optimize our movements, making us faster and more powerful.

Think about your codes like training aids, they may not be easy to understand or apply, but doing so can be very significant in your Martial Arts training.



An Inexpensive Training Tool for Bo

By Buzz Cox

Having trained in Isshinryu for many years, I have had to alter my methods over time to improve or achieve my desired results. Whether that be an increase in speed, power or understanding a fair amount of evolution was required to attain to my goals.

Unfortunately, this has had limited results when it comes to my Bo work. It is not for lack of trying or research but it seems that ability with the Bo was my Achilles heel. I struggled a great deal for a long period of time until recently when I discovered a simple and inexpensive tool to help me with my Bo work.

During one of my weekly pilgrimages to the local YMCA for a work out, I saw someone using a weighted bar to do some shoulder work. I had considered a weighted bar to improve Bo work in the past but this usually involved a barbell bar (20 lbs) and it was never practical to train kata with that kind of weight. This new bar was smaller, lighter and gave me focused strength training specific for Bo work.

This "new" bar was called a "Body Bar" and held some inherent disadvantages. First, it was for use in the gym for strengthening and thus had a foam covering for safety reasons. This did not allow the Bo to slide easily without effort. Second, and one that struck me close to my heart, it was rather expensive to purchase.

Being a fundamentally cheap individual, I set out to see if another option existed.

My search took me to a place that is near and dear to all of the male persuasion - Canadian Tire. There I found all the requirements for my training Bo for an extremely low cost. If you happen to find yourself in the plumbing section you will need these parts:

- 1 - 5' piece of ABS pipe. 1.25" thick. \$5.99
- 2 - 1.25" end caps. \$0.99 each.
- 1 - can ABS glue. \$5.99
- 1 - bag children's play sand. \$4.79

In a well ventilated area, glue one of the end caps on to the piece of ABS pipe. It takes only a few minutes to dry but you might want to set the glued end on the ground when filling just in case the end is not totally secure.

Fill the pipe with the play sand. A filled 5' ABS pipe will weigh in the nine pound mark. An alternative to one of the solid end caps would be a 1.25" clean out end on. This end has a cap that screws off and you can add or remove sand to get your desired weight. These usually are a little more expensive (\$5.99) but are generally worth it if you want to mix up your training or want to gradually add more weight as in the case of an injury.





An Inexpensive Training Tool for Bo By Buzz Cox

Glue the second end on and let dry. Total cost: \$18.95 plus tax and roughly 20 minutes.

The material that you use to fill the pipe does not have to be play sand. I just happened to have it on hand but any sand will do. I would however recommend against pebbles or rocks just because the sound can get annoying.

People have also suggested water which is a good idea as it can be drained for easy transport with the clean out end. Just be sure your end has a good seal after filling!

Some things to be aware of when using the Bo.

Ease into the workout with Bo basics using smooth movements. Jerky movements and fast kata can do some damage to your joints or pull muscles if you are not careful. Take the same precautions you would if you were doing basics with hand weights.

If you are finding the Bo extremely heavy then empty some sand out and work up to a full pipe. It is easier than you think to strain muscles or hurt yourself.

When doing kata or techniques with a Bo that is less than full, try to go a bit slower as the sand can cause an unexpected momentum shift.

When storing the Bo, try to lie it flat on the ground as it will bend if stored vertically on an angle and not supported (exactly opposite of the photo).

Incorporating this piece of equipment into my training has increased my confidence and strength when using a regular staff. When used appropriately, I am sure it can do the same for you.





Promotions at Chitora Dojo, Thunder Bay

On February 6th after a long and grueling night of Kata and Fighting, I am proud to announce new promotions at the Chitora Dojo.

Ashton Cannon—Yellow Stripe

Nicholas Titan—Sankyu—Purple Belt

Carter Sakiyama—Nikyu—Brown Belt

The testing was so difficult (and long) that the majority of the class left before the end. On top of that, only days later Carter left the country for France.

He claims it to be an exchange program, I think he's just healing up from the fights!

Great work and congratulations to everyone who graded.



Akatonbou Martial Arts is Moving

On March 29th, the Akatonbou Dojo in Winnipeg Manitoba is moving to it's new location at #3-14 Don Valley Parkway Winnipeg MB R2C2Z

If you are in Winnipeg, or want to go to Winnipeg, stop by for the Grand Re-opening from noon on.



The Challenges!

It's been a long cold winter this year, luckily, that's about to change (I hope!)

The challenges for this newsletter are going to be difficult, but will make your life easier as the weather improves.

It's time for an all endurance set of challenges!

The theme of these challenges is doubling. Take the challenge today, see your current level (either by count or time, and then try to double it before the next Newsletter (April). I'd recommend trying it at least once a week, but the more you do it, the better you'll get.

Karate

Kicks, pick a kick, any kick.

Now, do great kicks, proper technique lots of power, no pauses between. You can either do it time based (how long you can kick before you slow down/technique suffers) or count your kicks.

Record your status, now keep the goal in mind and work to improve it. Every time you do it, try to improve, even if it's just one more kick, many little steps still go a long way.

By the end, not only will you be doing twice as many, I'm willing to bet that every one of them will be better than the kicks you did when you started.

Kobudo

Pick a sequence, it can be any weapon, but choose a set of three to five moves, it could be from the basics, or part of a kata, and repeat. Just like the Karate challenge.

It may seem dull doing the exact same sequence again and again, and it may be, a good idea is to choose a sequence you think you could use work on. Then you not only improved your conditioning but your technique all at once.

Do it as often as you can for best results.

Training

Since it's still colder than I'd like for running outdoors, pick an indoor exercise, pushups, situps, leg lifts, mountain climbers, jumping jacks. Anything that you'll find difficult works.

Now just like the above challenges, do it as often as possible, trying to improve every single time. Don't get discouraged by an off day, but be persistent and don't let it slow you down.

Hopefully training in one area will generate enthusiasm to improve others as well!



Contributors



Editor & Author—Chitora Dojo

Mike Fenton—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Mike lives with his wife Kyla and has been training in Isshinryu karate for over 25 years, and has been an instructor for over 20 years. He is currently head instructor of Chitora Dojo in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Author—Chitora Dojo

Trevor Warren—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Trevor lives in Thunder Bay with his wife Maria. He has dedicated a great deal of his time to teaching and his own training with the realization that hard work is the key to success.



Jeff Long—Assistant Editor

Jeff Long—Thunder Bay, ON

Jeff is a Sandan and Sensei at the Chitora Dojo. He's also an English major who's been helping to reduce the spelling & grammar mistakes in the newsletter.

Author—West Man Dojo

Buzz Cox—Brandon, MB

Buzz Cox is a Godan in Brandon Manitoba, Originally from the Pas, he and Richard Wharf have been running the West-Man Dojo since 1998.



Author—Wanted

Authors are always wanted, why not contribute your opinions or insights? Anyone can offer something of value, regardless of rank or experience.

Karate Terms in this Newsletter

Chinkuchi—Focus and body alignment

Heiko Dachi—Ready Stance

Ka—Person / Practitioner

Kanetsu—Joint

Kime—Focus

Kobudo—Ancient Martial Way, the term used to describe all the weapons in Isshinryu and Karate.

Kosa Dachi—Cross Stance

Kumite—Free Fight

Kurakashi—Repeat

Mae—Front

Makiwara—Striking Board

Mushin—No Mind

Naha—Port city on Okinawa

Rokushaku—Six Foot

Sama—Honorific suffix applied to a name, denotes respect

Sankyu—Third Level Student (3 steps from black)

Seretsu—Line Up

Shiko Dachi—Horse Stance

Shin—Heart / Spirit

Shitogi—Gi Pants

Shozenkutsu / Seisan Dachi—Small forward stance

Shuri—Capital City on Okinawa

Tatsu—Dragon

Tatsuo—Dragon Man

Tonfa/Tuifa—Baton with Handle

Tsuki—Direct Strike or Thrust

Tsuru Dachi—Crane Stance

Uchi—Swinging or in-direct strike

Uchi Hachi Dachi—Inner Eight stance

Ude—Forearm

Uke—Hard block

Uwagi—Gi Jacket

Yubi—Finger

It is important to familiarize yourself with commonly used Japanese words. Try to memorize all the words each time and you will soon have a large "karate" vocabulary.



Submissions

Article Submission

Articles are welcome from anyone and everyone. They can be about anything related to the Martial Arts, a technique you think is just great; A better way to do a technique; History of a Karate Master; a tournament trick that works well; ANYTHING!

All articles are appreciated as e-mail. You can send it to your instructor to proof read and send in, or directly to me. (Mike (at) Isshinryu.ca) or (sensei@issheinryu.ca)

You can even include pictures if it helps your article!

Dojo Directory:

Any student is welcome at anytime to visit any dojo. Before class, always introduce yourself to the Sensei of the dojo and tell them who your current Sensei is.

For a full dojo list visit Isshinryu.ca We are getting too many to list here.

Affiliate Cities!

Abbotsford, BC

Contact: Mike O'Leary

Brandon, MB

Contact: Richard Wharf

Contact: Buzz Cox

Calgary, AB

Contact: Charles Boyd

Cookstown, ON

Contact: Harri T. Makivirta

Dryden, ON

Contact: Rick McGogy

Hope, BC

Contact: Norm Losier

Kenora, ON

Contact: Steve Davis

Contact: David White

Ottawa, ON

Contact: Tim Leonard

Quebec

Contact: Pierre Parenteau

Saskatchewan

Contact: Brian Smout

Sioux Lookout

Contact: Jim Sapay

Thunder Bay, ON

Contact: Mike Fenton

Contact: Trevor Warren

Vancouver, BC

Contact: Rachel McGovern

Windsor, ON

Contact: Albert Mady

Winnipeg, MB

Contact: Brent Horton

Canadian Isshinryu Abroad

Berlin, Germany

Contact: Ryan Boesche

Stow, Ohio

Contact: Albert Pecoraro

The Isshinryu Karate Expo is Coming!

This May long weekend, plan to be in Thunder Bay, ON and ready to train.

With 20+ seminars and attendees (and Masters) from across North America it's going to be a can't miss event!