



8. The screech of the train,  
on the rusty railroad tracks;  
The birds took to flight.
9. Early morn spring rain,  
beating down on the tin roof;  
washes time away.
10. Now the rain has fell,  
the flowers will drink their fill;  
Another summer day.
11. The fog rises up,  
and covers the fields beyond;  
the crickets still chirp.
12. Paint brush in my hand,  
flowing across the paper;  
the flower takes root.
13. Truth and delusion,  
are not found so far from here;  
Look into your heart.
14. Saki cup and I,  
spent many a long quiet night;  
Finding each empty.
15. The katana blade,  
cuts through the green bamboo  
stalk;  
and it kills the soul.
16. like a cork at sea,  
going nowhere with purpose;  
Life is beautiful.
17. Remember, forget,  
forget, remember, forget;  
Such is life's moments.
18. Shining katana,  
fluid energy abounds;  
Welcome, welcome, death.
19. Looking down the road,  
the black bird rests on the side;  
Hol It is a rock.
20. Unlocking the truth,  
from all mankind's confusion;  
I emptied the trash.
21. If I am to die,  
gazing at the katana;  
then let it be here.
22. Ocean waves caress the sand,  
October winds blowing;  
You are on my mind.
23. There is a special place,  
full of magic and awe;  
Memories of you.
24. The saki cup is full,  
A toast to all my dear friends;  
Empty is my mind.
25. A seagull flies over,  
sun soaked, wave washed beaches;  
longing to see home.
26. A rainbow kisses the earth,  
after the rain has left;  
But you're still there.
27. God's gift of love is here,  
beyond our worldly ways;  
Open up your heart.
28. The mystery of life,  
is not hidden from the truth;  
Look into your soul.
29. Don't put off tomorrow,  
what you can do today;  
Time has no mercy.
30. Awareness is the key,  
for surviving in life;  
To know is to be.
31. Her promise to me,  
A love that would last forever;  
Was broke when she left.
32. Now that she is gone,  
only memories remain;  
in my broken heart.
33. The quiet day and night,  
are filled with my missing her;  
But only my tears see.
34. In the black of night,  
from the clouds, the plane landed;  
My friend has arrived.
35. Colored lights shining,  
on the boats docked in the bay;  
Christmas time is here.
36. I called out your name,  
to watch the boats at sea;  
But I'm all alone.
37. I saw her smiling,  
through misty clouds in my dreams;  
Morning, hungry cat.



38. The pain is still fresh,  
she left me for another;  
My saki cup laughs.

39. Oh, to show control,  
in matters of heart and love;  
Where is the mind now?

40. Day so bright for love,  
hear her sparkling laughter fade;  
by the sandy beach.

41. World of grief and pain,  
show no mercy for this life;  
A new day, sun shines.

42. An Old Warrior fights,  
Year after year, against time;  
the bonsai lives on.

43. Gentle breeze, wind chimes,  
Rhythm of the universe;  
I drift off to sleep.

44. The shining new blade,  
A warrior's soul in steel;  
My spirit renewed.

45. A lovely morning,  
When I arose from the bed;  
A smile for the world.

46. Washing off the dirt,  
I hosed off the wooden deck;  
Gone are all the leaves.

47. The shamrocks open,  
in rejoice of a new day;  
How thirsty are we.

48. The heavy bag hangs,  
Waiting for the class to start;  
Hello, all my friends.

49. The rose's sweet smell;  
Reminded me of the past;  
When I smelled a rose.

50. The greatest treasure,  
Greater than wealth and power;  
Is living for God.

## KARATE-DO AND THE SELF ACTUALIZED INDIVIDUAL

**BY Mr. Alan Rench**

4th Dan Shorei-Ryu

U.S.K.A. Inc. State Representative,  
Colorado

Recently a prospective student came into our austere little dojo. I, like any responsible school owner eagerly approached the prospect, shook hands, and struck up a friendly conversation with the intent of adequately intriguing him so that he would join our club. As we spoke, he asked many questions regarding personal health which ranged from physical weakness to psychology. It became clear that this man was possibly seeking something I might not be equipped to provide. Perhaps he might actually be seeking the services of a trained psychologist which I am not.

As the conversation continued, the prospective student asked me if I believed in fate. It seemed to be an odd question, but he was genuinely interested in receiving an answer. Being the individual and iconoclast that I can, I answered that in all matters human there is no absolute fate or determinism. I went on to say that this should be qualified by adding that given any set of limiting factors, I could surely carve out an infinite number of outcomes. Jacobus Arndnius

(1560-1609) made an extensive argument against determinism. He was followed in suit by great philosophers such as John Locke (1632-1704), and David Hume (1711-1776). As I spoke, I was reminded that karatedo is a very effective method for changing one's life. I then assured him that karatedo was a practical method for self actualization through determination and properly channeled efforts.

How is it that I could manipulate a perceived fate?. There have been strong arguments waged both for and against determinism. I would like to begin by explaining that my field is that of a biologist and chemist. In my view there are two general categories which are factors in determining how man's life will proceed. These are genetic factors and environmental factors. Genetic factors are those which are encoded into DNA (Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid). One's entire biochemical and physical makeup is a product of genetic inheritance, random mutations (not necessarily negative), and environmental factors which effect genetics. Exogenous environmental factors are those which do not effect genetic makeup, but are able to effect our psychophysical well-being in term of placing positive or negative stresses upon our existence.

The concept of fate or determinism could be viewed from a genetic perspective. No more how I believe it came to be, it is important to understand that we are now direct products of genetic inheritance. A typical genetic example of manipulating fate is that of colon cancer. Assume that Mr. A has inherited a genetic predisposition towards contracting colon cancer at an early age from his father and grandfather. If the genetic predisposition is strong enough, then Mr. A will eventually develop colon cancer. Does this mean that Mr. A should accept his fate and "suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" by contracting colon cancer at an early age?. No way! If we are



allowed to assume that Mr. A is a young adult who is in good health, it is probable that he could prolong his vibrant life by fashioning living habits that are healthier than those of his father and grandfather. There is a strong body of evidence that proactive management of environmental factors can reduce (or at least delay) the chances of contracting colon cancer. If Mr. A's genetic predisposition towards contracting colon cancer is not quite so strong, then by properly managing environmental factors colon cancer might be avoided completely. This stands squarely in defiance of genetic determinism. Mr. A, and all others, can improve their psychophysical well-being by breaking away from old habits which are the roots of environmental determinism. Once a person breaks the bonds of old habits, he or she becomes free to carve out a new fate.

What does all of this have to do with the practice of karatedo? In fact, we are all born with unique abilities, handicaps, strengths, and weaknesses. If we were to simply sail through life with a come-what-may attitude, we could hypothetically be victims of fate correct? Wrong! For the most part, there are no true victims. If I am speeding along in a car that is headed for a sudden meeting with a telephone pole (as in self destructive behavior) is it fate to crash? Would it not be wiser to steer around the hazard, of course it would. Electing not to act or by simply failing to act through personal negligence negates the possibility of being a victim. True victims do exist but they are indeed rare. Through the practice of karatedo one can change old habits, and can reverse many of the effects that old habits have wreaked upon us. Karatedo can enhance our psychophysical well-being.

Karatedo is a narrow and difficult path which leads to the following: self defense, self control, mental toughness, concentration, and phys-

ical fitness. In other words, a well thought out martial arts program leads to improved psychological and physical health. There is one major complication to all of this. Even though karatedo is a very useful and effective tool, the saying that "you cannot make a horse drink from a pond to which it has been led" represents a significant problem in terms of getting results. Though there may be a strong class environment, students who are not strongwilled often fail to steer a course away from perceived fate. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a German Philosopher who labelled his personal position as critical idealism, the mind determines the characteristics of what we perceive to be true. As part of his vast and complex theory, Kant designed the concept of the hypothetical imperative. If we desire a particular end, such as improved health, then we must be willing to accept and actively expedite all of the means toward that end. If we are unwilling to do what is necessary, then our desire for that particular end is false.

Karatedo is a path for self actualization. A sensei can lead, poke, prod, and inspire, but the student must supply the drive or the spirit to fight on whatever the level of discomfort. Karatedo is a microcosm of the general human condition. It is essentially an experiment which tests the human spirit. Unfortunately, the methods of karatedo can be psychologically destructive for weaker individuals who cannot or will not make appropriate adjustments to the psychological, physical, and moral austerity that is required to become free from determinism, and to succeed in karatedo.

Students should be aware of these things for it is they who must supply the determination to succeed without rationalizing and placing the blame for failure where it does not belong responsibility remains with the student.

In closing, I would like to examine the elegant saying "The Supreme Way

Has No Hindrance." For us karatedo is the supreme way which offers limitless opportunities for self improvement and self mastery. Gichin Funakoshi admonishes us not to think of our training as rungs of a ladder. Instead, karatedo is a never ending process of human perfection. As we continually shoot at the bull's-eye our accuracy improves. Over time, we have substantially improved our marksmanship. Such is the way of karatedo, once we have mastered karatedo, we are no longer hindered by limitations. Questions of fate or determinism evaporate into the haze of dreams gone by.

## HIGH STANDARDS AND PROPER ATTITUDE

**BY Mr. Curtis West**  
4th Dan Kempo-Karate  
U.S.K.A. Inc. Style Head,  
Kempo-Karate

In karate, as well as other related arts, students strive to do their best. They learn and try to develop techniques as best they can. Their ambition is to become highly trained martial artists. However, as hard as they may train, if there is a low or no minimum standard of training, they will come up potentially short in skills. Each technique they learn should be in good definite form and as such the result will be a highly trained martial artist regardless of style/system.

In order to accomplish the skills mentioned above, there must be a proper attitude. The student must have a proper approach to learning each method or it can be impossible to learn correctly. An angry/frustrated practice will hinder the learning process, while a calm/positive practice will promote it. The student must learn and understand that to master karate skills, they must first learn to



master themselves. A good positive attitude will provide good positive results.

**NOTE:** A good competent teacher is essential to learning any martial art. A good teacher will use high standards and insist on a proper attitude. A good teacher will support and encourage all students to do their best.

## **SATISFACTION COMES FROM GENUINE ENJOYMENT OF THE KARATE EXPERIENCE**

**BY Mr. Raymond Murphy**  
4th Dan, Shorin-Ryu

There is an irreducible difference between belonging to a Martial Arts Organization or ryu (style) and our experience of what is referred to as Do.

We, as martial artists, should operate directly on that which is. Each of us creates a representation of the Do in which we belong. That is, we create a map or model which we use to generate our methods.

Our representation of this determines, to a large degree, how we will perceive others and what choices we will see available to us as we live most of our lives this way.

My biggest competitor is myself. Martial Art complacency is counterproductive to good Karate-Do. Without living through the process of becoming a teacher, karate rank means something different. And that's a special quality which sets a teacher aside from a practitioner.

Individual constraints constitutes the basis for profound differences among us as martial arts teachers. They either alter our prescriptions socially by enriching our experience and offers us more choices, or we let them impoverish us in a way which limits our ability to act effectively.

tively.

Any Martial Arts system is both a set of resources for living a particular way (Do), and a set of severe limitations for doing anything else. One value of my martial belief is that it makes me congruent. That part is very useful. It makes other people believe in me. But it also establishes a huge set of limitations, and my belief system is that you will find those limitations in yourself as a person as well as in your art (Do). My students were ending up being metaphors for my personal life because I made the ultimate tragic mistake. I believed that my perceptions were a description of what reality actually is!

My way out of this was not to believe what I was doing in the Martial Arts. That way, I did do things that didn't fit with "myself"; my "Do", etc. So, I decided that I wanted to write a book titled: "When you discover the real Martial Arts, then buy this book and lose all the perspective that you never had!"

If I simply change my Martial Arts system, I will have a new set of resources and a new set of limitations. Having the choice of being able to operate out of one. If I believe any of them, I will remain limited in the same way those systems are limited.

My job as an independent Martial Artist is to figure out what it is that effective World Masters do intuitively or unconsciously and to make up some rules so that I can teach similar institutions as the Masters have through a training period. I practice until it becomes a systematic part of my unconscious behavior and I end up being able to elicit the same responses that World Masters elicits.

I don't test my practice I arrive at for accuracy or how it fits with neurological data or statistics about what should be going on. All I do in order to understand whether my Martial Arts is an adequate system (Do) for what I am doing is to find out whether it works or not: Are you able to exhibit effectively in your behavior the same

patterns that World Masters exhibit, and get the same results?

Intelligence levels differ because of the number of supporting cells which give the conscious mind control of these functions (conscious/unconscious). Therefore some people can see what others don't because of the way our mind perceives itself. In the various martial arts that I have studied, these same basic principals hold true. The new and the old. We must believe in the future for that is where we will find change from the past.

Looking at the past, present, and future helps give me a sense of direction of where I need to go. But what means will I use to get there?

There have, of course, been enormous changes in our Okinawan methods in this century, and a lot of effort has gone into learning how to manage that change. For the most part, however, I still am using the martial theories and practices which were developed for, and which are effective in, tournament environments.

May of today's dojo operators have gained their experience during relatively stable martial environments. Despite all my talk of change, most of us are accustomed to training in a world where we can make certain fundamental assumptions and operate within them. Its almost as if we're simply training harder not differently in the expectation that what we need to do is just hang on until the change settles down.

**THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT OUR MARTIAL ENVIRONMENT WILL "SETTLE DOWN". THE TAI CHI TU INDICATES THAT CHANGE IS A PERMANENT PART OF OUR LIVES.**

The key to operating a dojo in a changing environment is to move the organization and its key people from stability to flexibility - a major challenge to the leadership skills of today directors.



This doesn't mean that "traditional" martial practice and values are in any sense wrong, or even outdated. Rather, they are only one set of tools a director, yudansha or teacher needs to operate effectively in a changing and unstable world. In fact, basic traditional martial skills provide a strong base. That way we can afford to exercise the flexibility required for positive leadership.

Dojo operations means making the "now" work; leadership means making the "future" work.

Dojo positive leadership within my parent organization, the United States Karate Association, Inc. suggest that by far Karate-Do is a large and far reaching move to educate our western world in the ways of eastern culture. Honor must be understood, also. The subtleties of bushido and of karate has always attracted the more intellectual person.

We all have various levels of understandings about the Tai Chi Tu or changes involved in nature. That is to say, the nature and evolution of man's consciousness must be understood.

In the structure of all mammals brains, there are two (2) hemispheres. And we as primates are the same. Yet we seem to have certain order within our structures that specialize its functions. Left hemisphere right body function and reading plus speech. Right hemisphere left body function plus visual.

They are innerconnected so that all information is shared, and this all happens at the speed of thought itself!

In split brain research, scientists found that subjects who for medical reasons or accidental trauma, have the two (2) hemispheres separated, have lost this ability to share this information. Yet, they function normally within society.

Thought travels through nerves in the brain and body where they jump

at the ends of these nerves to go elsewhere. These points where they jump are called synapse. The more times an impulse (electrons) jumps this divide, the more etched this chemical matter between them becomes. A few good examples of this are monolateral and bilateral walking, lunging and reverse punching, and all kicking. It's all inherent to us as humans.

One of nature's units of energy is an electron. And where more than one electron is present, and given the right conditions electricity and magnetism can result. (Electrons, protons, neutrinos, photons and gravitation are stable against radioactive decay.) Magnetism and electricity are inseparable.

Mankind discovered magnetism more than 2500 years ago. The force gets its name from the place where it was discovered, in the district of magnesia in Asia Minor.

The Greek philosopher Thales of Miletus apparently gave the first recorded description of magnetic efforts almost 550 B.C. However, not until AD 1600 was magnetism scientifically studied. This was done by Dr. William Gilbert, personal physician to Queen Elizabeth I, in his book De Magnete, which is a scientific classic.

Combined fields of electricity and magnetism produce electromagnetic energy. This is the energy of radar, light (photons), Xrays and gamma rays. We speak of this energy as electromagnetic waves and electromagnetic radiation. The word wave is used because a beam of electromagnetic energy shows high and low values as we measure it, like waves on a lake or ocean. Radiation denotes that the energy spreads out from its source in all directions unless guided by manmade devices.

Electromagnetic energy wave are called Hertzian Waves. Electromagnetism gives rise to the unified field theory.

An electromagnetic wave consists of two fields. One is an electric field

which rises and falls. The other field is magnetic, also rising and falling. When a beam of electromagnetic energy goes past measuring instruments, we find an electric field which grows larger and larger then collapses. As the electric field shrinks, the magnetic field grows in strength.

The field strength obeys an inverse square law. The strength of the field three (3) inches from the magnet is four (4) times as strong as the field six (6) inches from the magnet, and nine (9) times as strong as the field nine (9) inches from the magnet.

If a copper, silver or gold wire is moved rapidly up and down between the poles of a magnet (body organ) an electromotive force will be induced and, if the wire forms part of a closed circuit, electricity will flow and a magnetic field will result (body meridians).

That is to say, when an acupuncturist inserts his needle on a point, he interrupts a magnetic field (meridian) which creates an electric current that flows from its source in all directions through the needle. The energy waves appear like a chain of interlocking circles, with circles at right angles to each other. (These circles or lines of force are like elastic springs). Other needles at different select insertion points act as receptors and change the electric current back to magnetic energy thereby reinforcing a weak meridian. This is a natural mechanical process used to heal our body from energy imbalances.

Also our emotions are a necessary component of the human experience. One of the most powerful skills which we exercise as martial artists is our ability to represent and communicate our expressions which we have available as teachers.

The kata is a tool that is available to Senseis from any martial art to interpret emotions. Its practicality is two fold: first it offers explicit directions for what to do at any point dur-



ing an encounter, and second, anyone who is "nature" to Karate-Do has intuitions necessary to use this structure (Kata) and he/she only needs to become conscious of this.

Exploring new methods has been adopted by many Senseis and has led to such innovations as Tai Chi Tu weapons theory, Yin and Yang sex, training and food, etc. I have seen the passing of an emphasis upon rituals and a move toward judging dojo procedures by results instead of conformity to a particular Do. It has even become respectable now to work different kata especially in Kobudo. One of the important things to remember about techniques (kata) is your willingness to learn new ones, then to recognize that you, as an individual personality, are quite different from any of your Senseis who taught you the techniques (kata).

You need to extract from the various techniques (kata) the particular elements that allow you to express yourself as a personality. Then the techniques (kata) no longer belong to your Sensei, they become yours.

The next important thing about Kata is your awareness of the fact that every student who comes into your Dojo represents a different personality, a different attitude, a different background of experiences. Your approach to him/her must be in terms of him/her as a person with a particular frame of reference in order to enrich their experiences through Karate-Do.

## NITENKAI SHITO-RYU DOJO

**BY Mr. Pericles Damiski Veiga**  
4th Dan Shito-Ryu

The Nitenkai Academy of Karate Shito-Ryu was founded in December 1985 by the instructors Moritoshi Nakaema and Pericles Damiski Veiga. At present the teachers of

Nitenkai School are the following: Moritoshi Nakaema, 6th Dan; Pericles Damiski Veiga, 4th Dan; Vanderli de Paula Neves, 3rd Dan; Jose Aparecido De Moraes, 3rd Dan; Augusto Ferreira Dos Santos, 3rd Dan.

All the teachers above are recognized by the international organization, United States Karate Association, Inc. The main objective of Nitenkai School is the following: to teach traditional Karate to everybody interested in learning our style. When an individual comes to our school with a different style of karate or taekwondo, we maintain his/her former rank even if he/she has a black or white belt.

The students in our school work very hard at their karate and some have distinguished themselves in several competitions.

Our students have received medals in both fights (kumite) and forms (katas). All our instructors are interested in developing a high standard of work and they try to transmit their experience to the students.

Thanks to our instructors and students, our school will grow and we shall always try to reach BUDO.

The main point in the school of martial arts is not the style, the number of medals and titles that teacher has, or even the size of the academy dojo, or the type of gymnastic used "The principal thing in Academy is the mutual respect between student and teacher".

## LIVING THE ESSENCE OF KARATE-DO

**BY Mrs. Fran Babbino**  
2nd Dan Shuri-Ryu

U.S.K.A., Inc. State Representative,  
Florida

How many of today's karateka are truly training their mind and spirit along with their body? Unfortunately, it may

take an untimely mishap or catastrophic event in their lives to discover that they had not.

Faith in God and application of physical, mental, and spiritual training has brought me through a year in my life which would have been devastating if I had not exercised this training intuitively.

In August of 1990, while on a plane flight with my family enroute to Phoenix, Arizona, the use of my mental and spiritual skills were surprisingly tested. Calmly, but with detectable fear in their voices the flight attendants told everyone how to prepare for an emergency crash landing. My son and daughter sitting next to me started to cry and looked to me for reassurance. With my knowledge of previous dilemmas involving plane crashes via the media, I knew that the odds were not in our favor. Quietly, and with all of the assertion that I could muster, I told them that we were in God's hands. I told them how much I loved them, and we all held hands. For the next twenty-five minutes we sat calmly and quietly while my husband spoke to a couple sitting next to him that were completely distraught over the situation, then rejoiced with everyone when we landed safely.

In March of 1991, I was tested again. After undergoing a biopsy for a tumor I was diagnosed with cancer. My surgeon was shocked and extremely upset and my husband went to pieces, so I comforted both of them and let them gather strength and solidarity from my positiveness.

The surgery was scheduled, cat and bone scans taken, blood tests done, then the 5 1/2 hour modified radical mastectomy was performed. The morning after the surgery I was rushed back to the O.R. having developed a life-threatening Hematoma thus having to undergo a 3 1/2 hour emergency operation. In regaining consciousness I discovered that I had very limited movement of my left arm and could not



open or close my left hand. Prior to surgery my doctor informed me that this could happen due to the severing of nerves in the removal of the lymph glands. My determination would not allow this to be and from that moment on, I have worked to regain all of my mobility. Positive thinking and setting a goal to achieve and believe in brought me through half of my chemotherapy treatments, until I was tested for a third time.

My daughter was carrying my first grandchild, and my main goal for continuing with my Chemo treatments. Suddenly, a week before she was due to deliver, the baby died due to cord strangulation. At first I felt broken, shattered and completely devastated, subduing all of my physical, mental and spiritual training for a few weeks. Then I prayed, I thought, I meditated, and I trained physically.

In conclusion fellow Karateka, do not lose sight of the fact that your training involves more than conditioning your physical being. Your mind and spirit constitutes 2/3 of your existence as a whole so train as such. Don't wait until a problem arises and then learn how to deal with it, condition your whole being to deal with them before they arise.

## PATTERNS OF KATA FORMS

**BY Mr. Luigi Fiorini**

2nd Dan Chito-Ryu

U.S.K.A., Inc. Style Head, Chito-Ryu

Karate is much more than unarmed self defense. It is a physical art and a mental discipline. Only through diligent practice of the Kata can a student eventually master all the aspects of Karate.

Kata are the formal exercises of Karate. They consist of defensive and offensive movements against a number of imaginary attackers. Because

they involve the use of the whole body, plus intense concentration, Kata are considered the foundation for a successful training program.

Master Gichin Funakoshi often told his students, "the spirit of Karate is lost without courtesy". All the Kata must begin and end with a bow indicating respect for the masters and for the art form itself.

The Karate student must be humble and kind, never aggressive or servile, but, in complete control of himself; strong but gentle ... those, and other paradoxical teachings of Karate can best be understood through practice of these formal exercises.

## FOCUS

**BY Ms. Jenny Bell-Jones**

1st Dan Shuri-Ryu

Focus! We may have different names for it and we all have our own ways of teaching it, but focus is a part of everyone's training, regardless of style or national origin.

A perfect side kick; yes, focus is important here, and for our beginning students achieving that perfection is enough of a goal. A well performed kata: we should expect focus from intermediate students, and if our advanced students aren't displaying focus in all their techniques, then perhaps we should arrest their advancement.

But what about teachers? What about our focus? As a teacher I find the whole concept of focus constantly expanding to include areas that I never thought about when I was learning to punch "just right".

First and foremost we must help our students focus on their training and in these days of instant gratification and mindless entertainment that can be very difficult, especially with our younger students who may have never focused on anything longer than a forty second video game.

Teaching physical focus, I find comparatively easy: our classes are held outdoors and I often think how proud the late O'Sensei Trias would be if he could see my students learning to focus their punches and kicks on the trees in our town park; the big granite wall at the back of our workout area is an especially good teacher.

Personal or life focus is an entirely different matter and I often find myself in need of a reality check when frustrated by unfocused students. First thing I must look at is what have I offered them to focus on? Is it within their intellectual grasp? Can they apply it to their own personal situations?

To look seriously at my direction on focus; bearing in my mind that I try to extend my teaching perspective beyond physical technique to helping a student find a better path through life.

A teenage student whom I'll disguise as "Billy" was my best rising star about eighteen months ago. He was strong, athletic, a good fighter, and a quick learner. I was very focused on his continuing karate training, with visions of a successful tournament competitor and a future black belt floating through my meditations. He, on the other hand, was focused on the struggles of growing up in a very unsupportive situation: negative family, drugs, alcohol, serious girl friend problems, even a temporary school drop out, and a banishment to another state after some legal troubles. But, this kid is a fighter: he returned home, fought local peer pressure and returned to school, and graduated this summer. No, he hasn't returned to karate class yet, and maybe he won't, but the fighting base is there; he has definitely learned to focus his life in a better direction.

As a teacher, I have learned a serious lesson in "flexibility of focus". Billy and I continue our student/teacher relationship but along a



somewhat different track. I'll be taking him on his first deer hunt in a couple of months and we'll be studying focus in a whole new way. It will be interesting to see how he applies his old karate skills in this new pursuit.

As we lie motionless for hours in the rain and snow and clamber down canyons and up mountainsides in the dark; I count myself extremely lucky to be able to continue learning from this young man and hopefully helping him to focus in a healthy direction, even if it's on a different path than our original start in the dojo.

## LEARNING TO TAKE THE STRIKE

**BY Mr. Ed Wojciechowski**  
1st Dan Shorei-Ryu

One of the first concepts I learned as a beginning karateka was to "take everything but the strike." The underlying meaning of the phrase is a fundamental aspect of karate, and of the martial arts in general. If a martial artist's actions are inconsistent with this idea, there can be dire consequences.

Put simply, to take everything but the strike means to avoid the use of physical force, except when necessary to defend against it. The martial artist must give careful consideration to his use of force, as its meaningful use can easily result in broken bones or other serious injury. However, techniques can be controlled and tailored to a given situation, but this takes years of practice and experience.

The martial artist should recognize that there are a number of situations, both in and out of the dojo, where it would be good judgment to even take the strike. In the karate dojo, the opportunity to learn when to take the strike frequently presents itself.

You bow to your partner and after a brief period of time, bang, your face is on the receiving end of a reverse punch. You are a brown belt and he is a yellow belt and you are embarrassed. You don't care that the strike wasn't that hard, nor do you notice the "oops" look on your partner's face. All you can think about is showing him that you are the brown belt. Bad idea.

Unfortunately, there are probably enough real life stories like this to fill volumes. One story that I recall in particular, occurred in a school I attended. One of the students I knew there did not like to be hit ... at all. During an afterclass conversation, he told me how a few days earlier, during noncontact sparring practice, he was hit by his partner. He admitted that the strike wasn't very hard, but he nonetheless retaliated with an ax kick to the face. The kick landed near his partner's eye, and the swelling was immediate. The response in this case should have been more controlled, if it were needed at all.

As an instructor, I have been hit by a number of students I have worked with. In no case was the contact intentional, and almost always, the word "sorry" quickly followed. Drawing on my own experiences as a kyu level student, connecting with a technique of my own under these circumstances, could have lasting negative effects on the student.

There is an important point that should not be forgotten ... the law. Overreacting to a strike can result in criminal charges or a civil lawsuit. This is especially true for practitioners of the martial arts, since higher standards have been set for their actions.

Taking a strike in certain situations is not really contrary to what I was taught. Rather, I think it is something we all must learn to do, as part of our training in the martial arts.

## NOTES AND QUOTES

"When you have attained the Way of strategy, there will be not one thing you cannot understand and you will see the Way in everything."

**Miyamoto Musashi**

"This is the Way for men who wish to learn my strategy:

1. Do not think dishonestly.
2. The Way is in training.
3. Become acquainted with every art.
4. Know the Ways of all professions.
5. Distinguish between gain and loss in worldly matters.
6. Develop intuitive judgement and understanding for everything.
7. Perceive those things which cannot be seen.
8. Pay attention even to trifles.
9. Do nothing which is of no use."

**Miyamoto Musashi**

"To rush into the thick of battle and be slain in it, is easy enough, and the merest churl is equal to the task; It is true courage to live when it is right to live, and to die only when it is right to die"

**A Prince of Mito**

"Constantly learn death"

**Kusunoki Masashige**

"Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril. When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril."

**Sun Tzu**