



# KDA Today

Summer 2009

Karate Do Academy, Westlake, Ohio

Karatedo.net

"Everyone has a plan, until they get hit." - Mike Tyson

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## The New Shodan Pages

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Here are some thoughts of the new shodan about their journey to black belt.

*Sandy*



*"If honor be your clothing, the suit will last a lifetime, but if clothing be your honor, it will soon be worn threadbare."* William Arnot

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I was asked to write briefly about my journey to black belt. We wrote an essay on honor as a black belt, and the following paragraphs are some of my thoughts from that essay. As a woman, I think I have an interesting perspective that I hope you appreciate.

Female passivity and submissiveness, once honorable traits, are now looked upon as weaknesses. No woman wants to be thought of as a doormat. I think that for women's honor to be taken seriously, we first have to first take ourselves seriously. So I must strive to not give up on myself, and keep working toward my goals. Self-respect requires an honest and truthful

evaluation of oneself that does not find one wanting in honor and virtue.

I have benefitted from training by my teachers, mentors, advisors, and senseis – the least I can do is teach others what I know. I also try to never stop learning, in my job, while pursuing my personal interests, and keeping up with what is going on in the world.

I have hope for honor in a future where we treat each other with respect, benevolence, and honesty. I can contribute to this future by keeping true to these ideals in my life.



Our path in life is never straight and easy. How we rise each day to take the next set of stairs defines our attitude toward life.

### *Kerwin*

For me, it has been a journey to enjoy and expand my relationship with my son. I have had the fortune of watching him grow into a fine young man. Most importantly, we have had an opportunity to share time. Bruce Lee had a wonderful quote one time which sums up my Black Belt experience: "We all have time to spend or waste; it is our decision what to do with it. But once it is passed it is gone forever."

### *Connor*

As one door closes, another one opens. The end of the journey to obtain a black belt begins the new journey of going beyond that black belt in that system, as well as the opportunity to study another system. While studying another system, one combines their new knowledge and their previous to form a much more unique style. That style is then reflected on that person and their pupils, thus giving back to the original journey. In reality, the original journey never ends.

### *Sean*

The arrival at black belt level is recounted in gratitude. First gratitude is the God Almighty for the good health, the opportunity, and all the instruments in His plan. Next most importantly is gratitude extended to all the sensei's who brought their heartiness, wisdom, patience, and insights to the success of their karateka. Next gratitude belongs to fellow karateka who trained together, bruised together, sweated together, and commiserated and critiqued one another. Lower belt level karateka must be thanked for being patient and willing subjects of our learning to be senseis ourselves. And finally gratitude remains always with family and friends who always remain supportive and proud of our efforts.

### *Genevieve*

I feel incredibly honored to be a Black Belt. All of the hard work and preparation that I have done over the years and especially this summer has paid

off. It's is hard to imagine that all that work can be summed up in a belt. That is why I feel that now, after I have received my Black Belt, I truly have to earn the right to be called Sensei. This school has given me so many gifts and taught me a great deal. I am excited to play a bigger part in this school and hopefully teach others as well as my instructors taught me.

### *Chris*

When in late May the Ikkyus were all informed that we were invited to pretest for the rank of Shodan at the end of July at Huntington Beach, we all knew that our summer would be unlike any other we had previously experienced. The entire summer was devoted to karate-do kajukenpo karate. Each of us rearranged our schedules so that we could work out with each other multiple times a week, every week, leading to the pretest. Sometimes we met at the beach, other times at the YMCA. Our workouts were intense and were as much mental as physical. Sensei Jeff graciously worked with us the majority of the time. Sensei Bert and Sensei Adam, when in town, also worked with us as did purple belt Lynn. Each pushed us to the limit, pointing out flaws, bad habits, and ways to improve. With their help, and the help of all the senseis and each other, we all did improve and survived the beach pretest. We then switched gears and prepared our individual programs for the black belt test. Again, all the Ikkyus worked together several times a week to help each other practice and finalize each other's program. Sensei Randy taught me a kata for my program. All this hard work paid off on August 29 when we were all promoted to the rank of Shodan. I know that when I reflect on the summer of 2009, the "Black Belt Summer," my most fond memories will be of working with such great, unselfish people. Without them, I would not be where I am today. To them I say, "Domo arigato gozaimashita."

Martial arts points to ponder

# 守破離

Su-Ha-Ri- Stages to Learning

They are three stages to traditional martial arts training and relationships. These are not related to your belt but to your skill level. They are considered three concentric circles.

**Shu** (守: しゅ, "protect", "obey") — traditional wisdom — learning fundamentals, technique. Following without questioning.

**Ha** (破: は?, "detach", "digress") — breaking with tradition — finding exceptions to traditional wisdom, reflecting on their truth, finding new ways, techniques, and proverbs

**Ri** (離: り, "leave", "separate") — transcendence — there are no techniques or proverbs, all moves are natural

In the beginning, Shu is where you are training your mind and body. At first, it is impossible to have them move together then slowly, repetition after repetition they join. It is here you learn there is only one way to move your arm or to move your leg. It is here you do as you are told, typically not being asked to think, only to perform a task a certain way. It is difficult and hard to understand but you cannot move to Ha unless you achieve this.

In Ha, you start to try new ideas and add them to your knowledge. Turning your arm a little differently during a down block, to change the angle of your kick. You still must obey and follow what you have learned in Shu, but the

process is internalized and you beginning to understand the process more.

Finally as you progress you can achieve Ri. Ri is where you combine your knowledge from different sources and you apply them in ways that you can maximize.

This process is applied to many aspects of budo. From techniques to relationships within the dojo:

Ultimately, Shoo Ha Ri should result in the student surpassing the master, both in knowledge and skill. This is the source of improvement for the art as a whole. If the student never surpasses his master, then the art will stagnate, at best. If the student never achieves the master's ability, the art will deteriorate. But, if the student can assimilate all that the master can impart and then progress to even higher levels of advancement, the art will continually improve and flourish.

Think about this concept and where you might be in the process. It not only applies to the martial arts but to all types of understanding and teaching. You cannot move to the next until you understand the first and the last circle still requires attention to the first.



## From Sensei Jim.....

I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the recently awarded black belts on their hard earned achievement. In following their training sessions and preparation for the pretest on July 26 and the testing program on August 29, I knew we had a special group who had a deep desire to earn their black belts and were willing to do whatever it took to make it happen. I know they spent many hours on the beach going over the necessary techniques and conditioning themselves for the long pretest. All I can say is well done and you have earned all of our respect and admiration. Good luck as you continue your journey wherever it may take you, into the advanced martial arts.

Some thoughts regarding the upcoming pretesting and testing for students in our school this fall. Not enough of you, in my opinion, were present to witness the black belt pretest and final testing. I thought this was very disappointing as this was an opportunity for you to observe those who have achieved the goal you are working toward. It was also your duty to support your fellow karateka by being there. If you did not take the time and make the effort to be present, you should be examining your values as they pertain to your martial arts training. For those of you that were there. I believe it was an inspiration for you and a boost for the moral of the black belt candidates. Thank You.

Finally, our school would like to send out a special tribute to a fellow karateka training in the Portland area with Sensei Polevasik. His name is Fred Collins and we were looking forward to him and other students of Sensei Polevasik joining us here on the north coast this fall for their own black belt testing. Unfortunately, Fred currently has some health issues which prevent him from participating in martial arts. We want him to know we are pulling for him as one of our own and look forward to his recovery and rescheduling of their visit to next year. Our thoughts are with you Fred across the miles.

From Sensei Jim and all the black belts, train hard and prepare well for the upcoming promotions. We hope that many of you will continue progressing in your chosen art. Good luck!

## Medical Corner

### Muscle Soreness after Vigorous exercise

Vigorous exercise is the working of a muscle to the point of tearing it down so that a healthy body will repair and rebuild it stronger than before, thus increasing strength and stamina of that muscle. Remember the adage: "No pain, no gain!"

It is the utmost important to know one's body such that one can tell the difference between soreness as a healthy sign of challenging one's own system and that soreness which is the indication of injury or overuse that leads to injury-level damage.

Early soreness occurs from lactic acid accumulation which is a byproduct of anaerobic metabolism. Lactic acid irritates muscle tissue and impairs normal metabolism. It is best cleared out of the body by a light cool down and ample replacement of water and electrolytes.

Delayed muscle soreness occurring 1/2-2 days later arises from microscopic inflammation and muscle swelling as the body tries to protect the mildly injured muscle until such time as it has time to heal stronger than before. The best way to accelerate this healing and reduce soreness is to do light workouts to stimulate blood flow, warm up and cool down before all vigorous exercise, and follow exercise with a cool bath, gently stretching such as yoga, and maintaining healthy nutrition. Alternatively, a warm bath also can relax tense muscle and encourage the increase of healthy blood flow. ~Sensei Sean Lyons

## Bob's Corner



I've signed out "Karate Kata and Applications" from Porter Library at least a dozen times. I've always enjoyed comparing our katas to the pictures in the book. Recently, I signed out the book and actually read the introduction on kata and the next section describing how to practice kata. I think there are valuable lessons for all of us in its text.

I've been taught to practice kata different ways. The first is at normal speed with some imperfections. The second is at slow speed (i.e...each move taking 3 seconds to complete). You should strive to be as perfect with each move as possible. The third is as fast as possible. As you increase the speed of your kata, your techniques will get "sloppy". I'll propose a fourth method. This method is when performing a kata individually. When performing kata as a group, we tend to use the same timing for each move throughout the kata (to stay together). When performing a kata as an individual, you have the opportunity to change the timing to tell the story of the battle. I would recommend doing any block followed by a strike as quickly as possible (real speed fighting), but follow it with a pause to evaluate your next move (feel free to discuss with me in class).

The insight I believe the book provides is a fifth method to practice kata. While doing a kata, you should focus your attention on the center of your body (~2 inches below your belly button). I believe you should focus on this spot and add it to your kata practice.

I found that when I performed Pinan 4 while focusing on my center, my kata was performed lower than I've ever done it. You may ask how did I maintain my focus. I took a child's building block and placed it under the knot of my belt. You will need to tighten your belt enough to feel the block under the knot of your belt. Focusing on this point permitted me to lower my center of gravity throughout the kata. As an experiment, I tried to maintain this focus without the block. I lasted about eight moves into the kata before I felt myself rising up. Currently, I need the block as a training aid to maintain my focus. Someday, I hope to be able to maintain my focus without an aid, but not yet. It may seem a silly request, but I invite you to practice kata with your focus on your center and see if you have similar results. ~RT

### Editors Note

I would like to thank and congratulate all the new shodan. I want to thank them for their articles and congratulate them on their achievement of black belt. I would also like to thank sensei Randy for writing Bob's Corner. Domo arigato!!!~Vincent Hwang

