

SEIZAN®

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Editorial Staff:

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Amy Young



Janice Tori



Bradley Webb

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A Gathering of Eagles

November witnesses the completion of another eventful quarter for AAKF, topped off by the celebration of Sensei Robert Fusaro's award of 8th Dan by the International Traditional Karate Federation.

On September 10, 11, and 12, the AAKF Technical Committee conducted its third national seminar that was hosted by the Missouri Karate Association. Kudos go to Barry, Brian, and Darrell Power for the outstanding organization. Participating members came from over 17 states and 8 regions. In preparation for the ITKF World Championship in Curitiba, Brazil, Toru Shimoji and Bradley Webb conducted US team training alongside general training sessions and workshops by Senseis Robert Fusaro, Mahmoud Tabassi, Albert Cheah, Alex Tong, Richard Kageyama and Vince Nistico (see article by Andrea Bowman). Accordingly, *Seizan's* AAKF Member Spotlight is on Brad Webb, coach of the 2010 and 2011 US Team and one of the most successful national and inter-

national competitors in AAKF history.

Harking back to our roots, this issue's Perspectives are recounted by Sander Neggo, who started his training with Nishiyama Sensei in 1964, some 45 years ago! *Seizan's* conversation with Janice Tori is yet another treat for our readers. Janice succeeded her mother, Ms Aiko Tori as Executive Director of AAKF and has taken on the tremendous responsibilities in overseeing AAKF operations since our re-organization. We also present the second of a two-part discourse by Dr. Tim Hanlon on the importance of inside tension in the executing of Karate techniques (Technical Notes).

Seizan has recently taken on an international flavor as Amy Young, our Productions Editor, embarks on a professional sabbatical in Beijing. The *Seizan* staff offers our best wishes to Amy, and our appreciation for her continued dedication in ensuring that *Seizan* reaches you, our members, in its usual, fine layout.

Sensei Robert Fusaro Awarded 8th Dan by ITKF

October 25, 2010

The AAKF community celebrates the awarding of 8th Dan by the International Traditional Karate Federation (ITKF) to Sensei Robert Fusaro on October 18, 2010. This honor was bestowed on Mr. Fusaro by the ITKF "for his steadfast contribution to the art of Traditional Karate and, in particular, to his outstanding dedication to the fundamental principles of the ITKF as envisioned by the late Sensei Hidetaka Nishiyama", founding President of AAKF and ITKF. Both the ITKF Technical Committee and the ITKF Board of Directors were unanimous in their support for Sensei Fusaro's nomination.



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Q & A with Janice Tori

Seizan interviews Janice Tori, Executive Director of AAKF. The interview is posted in its entirety at aakf.org.



Janice Tori
Executive Director AAKF

"Ultimately, it came down to the fact the members really treasured their affiliation in the AAKF and wanted to stay together."

Janice Tori



Sensei
Hidetaka Nishiyama

S: Janice San, on behalf of our members, I want to thank you for your tireless efforts in sustaining order in the office through the AAKF's rebuilding efforts. What would be your most gratifying moments and your biggest challenges in the last 12 months?

T: The most gratifying moment for me came in April when we received most of the 800 individual memberships and 59 club registrations for this year (as opposed to 16 clubs and 380 members in 2009). That was a testament of faith that members believed the AAKF could keep on going and their desire to keep the organization alive.

When I came on board last July 2009, I had no idea what had been going on in the AAKF or ITKF between 2008 and 2009 after Sensei Nishiyama's passing. The office was in chaos, membership cards were months behind, people were not communicating with each other and morale was low. Everyone told me the AAKF was going to go under. I felt very sad at that thought. The karate organizations have been a part of my life since I was a teenager. When I thought of how excited Sensei Nishiyama and my mother, Aiko Tori, were in the 1960s when they were young and vibrant, the vision they had, the long hours that they happily worked for the future of karate, I felt that should not go to waste. So I set out to see if the AAKF could be saved.

The biggest challenge was getting people to talk to each other and trusting each other. There was disagreement on whether to keep the AAKF or start a new organization. Some hard feelings resulted over those arguments; people were angry and communication was at a standstill. The next biggest challenge was getting the back-taxes straightened out because people were afraid that the organization did not have the funds to pay its old obligations. The records were in such disarray no one knew what to do.

It took many hours to sort through that and get the accountant on board. Financially, now everything is up to date and paid up. There was also the question, who should be the leaders of the AAKF? Clearly no one person could replace Sensei Nishiyama. Bill Bottger, who was the last remaining member of the old board, got Latham & Watkins to do pro bono work for AAKF. They helped us write the new rules and regulations and the leadership went to the regional directors of AAKF. Ultimately it came down to the fact the members really treasured their affiliation in the AAKF and wanted to stay together. The first meeting in January was very gratifying when the board and regional directors got together and voted in the new Rules and Regulations. Finally, the lifeblood of the organization which are the club and individual memberships needed serious attention. Most people don't care about the politics of the organization, they want their membership cards and *kyu* certificates. They want good training. I feel the memberships are the people's individual contracts with the AAKF and they should be honored by receiving their cards in a timely manner. When the memberships started to rise in March, I was just thrilled and happy. For about two months, all my spare time was spent getting the cards out to the members. The biggest obstacle to running the office is that we had no money to pay office staff or rent. I have a full time job. Even now our funds are very limited but more money will have to go into administration of the office.

Another gratifying moment came when we all met at the national camp. All the instructors and members were in the gym doing the new format where they broke up into small groups with the senior instructors critiquing only a few individuals instead of one instructor teaching a large group.

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Sensei Fusaro Continued

Sensei Fusaro currently serves as Senior Counsel of the AAKF Technical Committee, and Senior Advisor of the AAKF Executive Board of Directors. Mr. Fusaro began his karate study at the Japan Karate Association (JKA) headquarters in 1955, not realizing at that time that it was to become a lifelong passion. He had the distinct honor of participating in the first JKA tournament held in 1957, where he and seven other non-Japanese students demonstrated semi-free sparring. Mr. Fusaro received his *shodan* in 1959 from Master Masatoshi Nakayama. When Sensei Hidetaka Nishiyama arrived in Los Angeles in 1961, Mr. Fusaro continued his karate journey with Sensei Nishiyama and remained his longest training student. His dojo, Midwest Karate of Minneapolis located near downtown Minneapolis, has produced hundreds of

black belts and recently celebrated its 52nd anniversary.

Sensei Fusaro's lifelong dedication to the practice of Nishiyama karate is an inspiration for all of us. Toru Shimoji, President of AAKF, extends his personal congratulations, and remarks, "Nishiyama Sensei is looking down from heaven and is so proud of Sensei Fusaro; not just for being recognized as *Hachidan*, but for the person and leader that Sensei Fusaro is for AAKF."

Please join us in extending our congratulations to Sensei Fusaro on this auspicious occasion.

Sensei Fusaro lives in Minneapolis with his wife Gloria and two sons, Michael (4th Dan) and Darrell (3rd Dan). Sensei Fusaro may be reached at rfusaro@midwestkarate.org.



*Sensei
Robert Fusaro*

AAKF Member Spotlight: Bradley Webb

Brad Webb started his karate career in Springfield, IL in 1981 under Doug Dennis, studying Shudokan karate-do. He immediately took a liking to karate, training five days a week. Brad moved to Dallas, TX in 1982, and was gratified to meet Alex and Susan Tong who were in the midst of starting a club at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) in September 1982. He has kept in contact with Doug Dennis over the years.

Brad was instrumental to the genesis and throughout the history of the UTD Karate Club. He was one of the ten founding members, and served as a club officer until he finished his Masters degree in 1988, the same year that he met Elizabeth Regnier. To date, some 28 years since he met Alex Tong, Brad still trains at the UTD club and teaches whenever Dr Tong is indisposed.

Brad and Elizabeth married in July, 1990 and started Japan Shotokan Karate Dojo (JSK) in August. JSK was a full-

time, six days a week business while Brad pursued his parallel full-time career at Nortel Networks. Brad and Elizabeth wanted to grow the art outside the University system and its related bureaucracies. Brad also realized that teaching in itself is the best teacher, so he focused on this vocation for his as well as his students' development. JSK founded four additional dojos, and Brad worked tirelessly with instructors state-wide in Texas and Oklahoma to produce traditional karate competitors and teachers.

Brad started competing under Dr Tong's direction in 1985 and was a member of the AAKF national team from 1993 to 2007. He has consistently placed among the top four in national events and in the top eight in international competitions. Among his achievements, Brad has won four World and Pan-Am Gold Medals.

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Pan Am Team presenting the 2000 Nishiyama World Cup team kumite' gold medal to Sensei. From left, Justo Gomez, Brad Webb, Nishiyama Sensei, Luis Vazquez, Ricardo Buzzi, Toru Shimoji (not pictured Avi Rokah). The medal was displayed at the ITKF Hombu Dojo, Los Angeles.



National AAKF Seminar in St. Louis, Missouri

By Andrea Bowman



*Sensei
Bradley Webb*

The Missouri Karate Association hosted the AAKF National Seminar in St. Louis, Missouri on September 11 and 12, 2010. It was quite an honor to have the AAKF technical committee instructing the seminar. This weekend was both mentally and physically exhilarating.

We began on Friday night with spirit training led by Sensei Toru Shimoji. The spirit training reminded me of a modern day boot camp, with the exception of knowing that the US National team was training with me. Working together I quickly realized I had to rely on my own ability to train my hardest. This stirred in me the spirit necessary to continue with the rest of the weekend. Working my

body hard enough physically seemed to open my mind to appreciate the exact points the directors were making in the effective use of my body for speed and timing. It was a wonderful precursor to the Saturday seminar.

Saturday morning began with the technical directors working closely with the children ranging in ages from 5-12. Sensei Toru Shimoji and Sensei Bradley Webb instructed the children. They incorporated exercises to help the children understand the use of their muscles and the coordination of their arms, legs and body in one motion. The children were enthusiastic and impressed by the confident, yet gentle demeanor of each Sensei.

[Continued on page 6](#)



Q & A Continued

Everyone was so involved with the process of passing on what they knew, examining what was being given and sharing the experience. There was no ego, there was no difference between instructors and students because both were equally involved in learning. The students were learning from the instructors and the instructors were learning from the students. I really felt that Sensei Nishiyama's and my mother's spirits were with us then.

S: Your daughter, Amy, who's a concert flutist, is now taking traditional karate. Is there a genetic trait within the Tori gene pool that gravitates towards this martial arts form?

T: I wouldn't exactly say that. My degree was in theatre arts in acting and directing and I was an actress for many years before necessity forced me to get a full-time job. Amy got her masters of music in flute performance and is now free-lancing and teaching. I'd call us the artsy types. Amy had to stop training because she hurt her arm in training two weeks before an important audition. However, karate and the people have always been a part of our lives. It's part

of our personal history. We can appreciate the time and dedication it takes to become really skillful at a discipline because we've done the same in our fields.

S: Looking forward, what is your vision of AAKF years from now?

T: The future of AAKF will depend upon the direction that the leadership of AAKF takes within the next few years. They have been entrusted with the responsibility to carry the organization forward.

I personally believe that the emphasis should be on the value that karate brings to a person's life, what AAKF as a non-profit organization gives to the public benefit. The development of a strong youth program is important. The ultimate purpose of training should be the discipline and mastery over oneself through the training. Right now, the directors have an opportunity to focus on developing and strengthening AAKF as a national organization without being encumbered with the international organization and politics that diverted Sensei Nishiyama and my mother so much.

I wish the very best for the AAKF.

*"I really felt that
Sensei Nishiyama's
and my mother's
spirits were with us
then."*

Janice Tori



Perspectives: Sensei Nishiyama's Spirit Lives On

by Sander Neggo

In 1964 I was attending the University of Southern California. I was 21 and in my junior year majoring in Psychology. Tuition was a whopping \$50 per unit and gas was \$0.37 cents a gallon. I found a karate club on campus and started training. It was very disappointing. Just a few students ever showed up and whoever was the highest rank led the class. Sometimes a brown belt, other times a green or white belt, but never a Black Belt nor was there a lesson plan nor instructors with good coaching skills. I was ready to quit but decided to give it just one more college try.

When I arrived at the training hall I was surprised to see so many students in *gis*, even some Black Belts. One of them barked out an order and everyone lined up. I hopped too at the end of the line. The room fell silent with a sense of tension in the air. Sensei Nishiyama and Sensei Yaguchi filed in and were greeted like royalty. We had an amazing training session followed by exams. I was completely taken by the beauty and elegance of motion displayed by both Senseis. "Now this is what I have been looking for – this is real karate", I told myself. I am so glad I gave it one more chance.

I learned that Central Dojo was just a few miles from campus. I couldn't afford dorm fees so I commuted daily and trained at Central on my way home. It was great! Karate was in its hay day. Classes were always crowded with students from all walks of life, from many countries and many ethnic groups. I felt right at home. Sensei Nishiyama amazed me. I had never met a man of his caliber before. He was completely disciplined and focused. When he spoke he was brief, concise and to the point. He led by example.

I struck a certain affinity with Sensei because English is not my first language either and I know from my own past how difficult it can be to get established in a country that is foreign. Sensei Nishiyama was assimilating to a foreign

country in order to propagate the art of karate to the Western World. He, almost single-handedly, built a successful national and international karate organization from virtually nothing.

The key element that made Sensei Nishiyama so inspirational was his ability to get more out of his students than they thought they had in them. He would drive his athletes way beyond their own perceived physical and mental limits. No matter how tired I was, I knew that all I had to do was to drag my weary carcass down to Central and the dojo spirit would capture and spur me on to get a good hard workout. Afterwards, I would leave without a care in the world and feeling fit and spry. That still holds true today.

Sensei Nishiyama taught me to take the dojo spirit with me into everyday life. After training at Central for 10 years, I left Los Angeles to see the World. For several years, I vagabonded all over Western Europe, North Africa, Scandinavia and Asia. From time to time I ran into some perilous situations. My karate training with Sensei Nishiyama always sustained my self-confidence. I practiced keeping stable emotions – never displaying fear nor anger.

Sensei Nishiyama's spirit was with me and still is. I feel his spirit each time I train. I believe his spirit lives on within each one of his students whenever they train together or alone. To this day, I still have not met another person of Sensei's caliber. I think he broke the mold. We were so very blessed and fortunate to have his guidance and inspiration for so many years, well into maturity and even old age for some of us.

Sander Neggo currently resides with his wife in Portland, OR. He holds the rank of Sandan and currently trains and coaches at the Portland VA Karate Club with Sensei Jerry Fitzpatrick and at the Oregon Martial Arts Center with Sensei Art Cherry. Mr. Neggo may be reached at sandman2@teleport.com.



Author demonstrates body dynamics of gyaku-zuki during his brown belt examination by Nishiyama Sensei; circa 1980

"Sensei Nishiyama taught me to take the dojo spirit with me into everyday life."

Sander Neggo

Spotlight Continued



Sensei Toru Shimoji

Brad has made countless friends worldwide during his competitive years, and continues to share technical discussions with them about karate, gymnastics and traditional martial arts training. Webb serves in the coaching staff of the 2009 and 2010 AAKF National teams and also as an International Class A competition Judge, one of four on the AAKF Technical Committee who continues to travel and participate in international competitions. When Nishiyama Sensei passed away in 2008, Brad was part of the transitional Board of Directors until the installation of the current Board that comprises AAKF Regional Directors.

While competition has always been a major aspiration, Brad is also devoted to expanding the traditional karate world in Dallas. He credits Elizabeth as being inspirational in motivating him to be a better teacher and in always helping others to learn karate. Brad remains active by attending or giving regional and national seminars. He truly believes that goodwill and cooperation among Southwest schools and those in other regions is the future of the AAKF.

Brad currently lives in Parker, TX with his wife Elizabeth (Sandan) and their twin girls. He can be reached at: bwe962@airmail.net.

Seminar Continued

Sensei Robert Fusaro started the general training sessions with insightful instructions on *bunkai*, timing and ways of increasing power and speed in techniques. Sensei pointed out how to create pressure by using the legs and core effectively. As team training for the US National team was conducted by Senseis Shimoji and Webb. Senseis Mahmoud Tabassi, Albert Cheah, Alex Tong, Richard Kageyama, and Vince Nistico continued general sessions on technique timing for *kihon*, *kumite*, and *kata*. We practiced *go no sen* and *sen no sen* timing drills and learned how to step back in order to see and feel our opponents.

During subsequent sessions, I had the unique privilege of working with Sensei Albert Cheah. He was able to quickly identify the corrections I needed to incorporate into my *kata*. He was very clear, precise, and with a little humor, was able to help me implement the corrections into my techniques. The break-out sessions were the highlight of the seminar. Students were divided into small groups and the technical directors rotated between the groups giving instruction on how to improve individual *katas*, timing in *bunkai*, and using breath and body action for maximum power.

The instructors taught us how to use our inner strength and muscles to move quickly and efficiently. They help-

ed us understand how to generate power and implement it into our techniques. The technical directors helped us analyze our techniques, take out the rote part of our karate and gave us the ability to think, analyze and critique our own internal and external body movements. They illustrated how we can increase our knowledge by the way we train.

The seminar concluded with a question and answer session, which allowed the students to ask any questions of the instructors, no matter how personal or technical. This was an outstanding opportunity to learn from the very best. I walked away from the seminar feeling energized about karate and anticipated using this information in my training.

The biggest impact was the clear and unified message of the directors despite their diverse backgrounds and experiences. Their teaching styles were distinctive but the core message was the same: Shotokan karate is a life-long sport that trains the mind, spirit, and body. I am confident that the AAFK team will continue to educate a new generation of students with their collective knowledge and wisdom.

Andrea Bowman trains at the Missouri Karate Association in St. Louis, Missouri. She currently holds the rank of 1st Kyu.

"I am happy to have completed this lifelong project and I have confidence that we can pass on the true Art of Traditional Karate to future generations. Now is your time to meet the new challenges and to accept the opportunities offered by this body of knowledge so that Traditional Karate may continue to grow and develop for the benefit of all that strive for higher levels of understanding...both mind and body."

Hidetaka Nishiyama

from "Tributes to Sensei Nishiyama"

Technical Notes: Inside Thigh Tension in the Execution of Outside Tension Stances

By J. Timothy Hanlon, MD

Introduction. Shotokan Karate uses stances as foundation to deliver techniques which include punching, striking, and blocking. The purpose of the stance structure is to maximize power development by allowing maximal use of the muscular power of the larger skeletal musculature of the legs and buttocks region in the performance of upper body techniques. The smaller muscle mass of the upper torso is inherently limited in power generation based solely on the muscular structure of the arms and trunk. The development of stances has allowed the power generated by the larger muscles of the lower body to be transmitted to the upper torso for specific techniques. To maximally utilize this power, the concept of connection--connecting the power generated from the lower body to the upper body has to be developed. The types of power that can be developed by the lower body that rely on this connection include dropping power, rising power, shifting power, body vibration, and rotation. In this paper we will emphasize particularly the proper utilization of the power of rotation, though the principles to be discussed apply to all forms of power generation. The goal remains to maximize the development of transmissible power to the target area to do maximum damage. For the purpose of discussion, our attention will be primarily directed toward *zen-kutsu dachi*, as it is the most fundamental of our stances, but the principles apply equally to all these four outside tension stances.

The development of stances. The first concept of stance is foot position, i.e. the length and width of the stance and how to move with some stability in the stance being learned. Later, the student moves to level two: the development of some tension in the legs beyond that necessary for the act of standing. In its early development, this takes the form of squeezing the muscles of the legs and buttocks in position of the stance, and this inward squeezing of the buttocks produces the "outside tension" of outside tension stances. This occurs because the gluteal or buttocks muscles are external rotators of the hip thereby causing the thigh to rotate externally or outward. Stage three introduces the concept that the legs "push against each other" creating a dynamic tension between the legs to produce strength and stability in the stance.

Further refinement of these three stages and progress in moving smoothly from one stance to another manifests from the gathering

of the center (inside tension) to facilitate movement that is fluid and precise. However, in order to fully utilize the tremendous power of the lower body musculature, including primarily rotation, and of course vibration, another step in the development of outside tension stances is necessary--inside tension.

Initiation of rotation. The initiation of rotation is a complex move that includes driving off the back leg, utilization of the pulling hand to provide counter torque, the use of a backward pulling action of the front leg, as well as an active twisting of the hips and pelvis both forward on the technique side and reverse on the pulling side. However, the initial speed of the rotation can be greatly increased by the squeezing of the inner thighs at the instant of the initiation of the rotation process. To achieve maximum speed of rotation, use of the thigh adductors and internal rotators (or inside tension) is required if full utilization of all possible speed is to be achieved.

Termination of rotation. In order to capitalize on the tremendous power generated by the lower body during rotation, a connection of the upper body with the lower body must be present and maximized at impact time (*kime*). The active use of the inner thigh at impact balances the use of the external rotators and abductors of the thigh, principally the large gluteal muscles but also including the piriformis, the internal and external obturators and the gemelli (buttocks muscles) and allows for greater strength and stability of the stance at impact. This counter balance of external rotation (or outside tension) primarily produced by buttocks muscle tension at impact by use of the thigh adductors and internal rotators (or inside tension) also allows for greater stance compression or "density" at impact. Without the use of the inner thigh at this instant the sense of dropping of the stance is completely lost.

Perhaps equally important is the need to achieve abrupt termination of the rotation of the hips that is critically timed to the completion of the technique such as *gyaku-zuki*. This abrupt termination of rotary power converts into energy in the terminating fist at the instant of impact. Loss of this critical timing at impact would markedly reduce the effectiveness of the technique due to loss of the transmission of rotational energy generated by the lower body into the technique. Instantaneous termination of rotation is virtually impossible without the squeezing of



Sensei
J. Timothy Hanlon, MD



the inner thighs together as in inside tension stances. The inner thigh tension becomes the door jam, so to speak, abruptly stopping the moving door (hips) just at the moment of impact.

Translation/Movement. In order to move from one outside tension stance to another, the use of the inner thigh muscles is basic to smooth transition. This is a very basic principle and is learned early in training. However, this "gathering to the center" necessary for smooth movement from one stance or position to another, uses the same muscles, the adductors and internal rotators of the thigh, as are utilized in initiation and termination of rotation. The contraction is not so sharp as at the moment of *kime*, but the same principles apply. The faster these muscles contract, the faster and smoother is the movement from one stance to another. In a technique such as *oi-zuki*, the inner thighs greatly aid in the speed and smoothness of the movement to the next *zen-kutsu dachi* and, as detailed above, are critical for maximum stability of the stance at technique delivery.

Execution and training. From a practical standpoint, we must understand the dynamics of the use of inside tension in the process of hip rotation.

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Technical Notes Continued

First, and foremost, the stance structure in *zen-kutsu dachi* must be correct with the tailbone pushing toward the navel and the spine in a natural erect position. Then, with the buttocks slightly tensed, the process of rotation is actively initiated by the squeezing action of the inner thigh muscles which is actively maintained throughout rotation. The contraction of the internal rotators and adductors of the thigh continues throughout the process of rotation and actively participates in the process of *kime'*; thus stabilizing the stance and abruptly terminating rotation (*vida supra*) critically timed to the upper body technique. Failure to continue the use of inside tension throughout the entire process of rotation will result in a decrease in the velocity of rotation, a less abrupt termination and less stability of stance at impact (*kime'*).

Summary. Inside tension, or the use of the thigh adductors and internal rotators in outside tension stances, allows for a greater use of the lower body energy in upper body techniques such as punching. We have seen how this inside tension is utilized in the initiation of rotation, the instantaneous termination of rotation allowing for transformation of rotational power into straight line power, and the increased connection of the stance made

possible by the counter balance of the outside tension of the opposing buttocks musculature allowing a dropping sensation at the moment of *kime'*. It is also obvious that the same inside tension is necessary when moving (translation) from one outside tension stance to another.

Though the use of inside tension in *zen-kutsu dachi* provides significant additional benefit as discussed, it must be acknowledged that in outside tension stances the primary action is outside tension produced by active contraction of the muscles of the buttocks. The use of the inner thigh only provides the necessary counterbalance to this outside tension---a dynamic balance between opposing muscle groups, thus providing a degree of stance stability otherwise not achievable without this inner thigh contribution.

This is the second of a two-part excerpt from the article "The Paradox of Outside Tension Stances: Inside Tension and its Relationship to Power Generation" by J. Tim Hanlon; published in Shotokan Karate Magazine. The article in its entirety can be accessed at aakf.org. Dr. Hanlon (6th dan) of Bend, OR, is AAKF Regional Director of the Pacific North-west and AAKF Chief Medical Judge. He can be reached at thanlon@bendbroadband.com. ®All rights reserved.

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National AAKF Seminar in St. Louis, Missouri
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