

SEIZAN®

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Inside this Issue:

Letter from the Editor

Q & A with Shimoji Sensei

Current Events

Upcoming Events

Perspectives

AAKF Member Spotlight

Technical Notes

AAKF Election Results

AAKF Newsletter
Volume 1, Issue 1

May 1, 2010

A New Beginning

Dear fellow members:

Welcome to the inaugural issue of **Seizan**, the official e-newsletter of the AAKF. Seizen is the romanization of the *kanji* “西山” or West Mountain. This name pays homage to Nishiyama Sensei. As the founder of the AAKF, Sensei bestowed upon its members the vision of seeking the common underlying principles that amalgamate traditional karate. The newly elected AAKF Executive Board of Directors pledges to rally our membership in an effort to pool our collective knowledge toward realizing Sensei's vision.

Seizan is a key component of such efforts. Its contents are

intended to inform your point of view as short essays as *Current and Upcoming Events*, educate *Perspectives*. Please send your submissions to Seizan@aakf.org. Instructions for submitting content can be found at the AAKF website aakf.org. Your continuing support is essential to keep our membership strong and to ensure that AAKF remains a thriving organization.

Sincerely yours,

The Editorial Staff

We welcome your feedback in the form of *Letters to the editor* and



Toru Shimoji

Q & A with Toru Shimoji

Seizan: *Toru-san, congratulations on becoming the President-elect of the AAKF. Could you share with us your vision as well as the long and short-term objectives of the restructured AAKF?*

Shimoji: I think our initial goal is to sustain the positive energy that was ignited in January during our BOD meetings. To this end, we have already enacted streamlined

administrative processes. Our newly restructured Technical Board is busy setting up new guidelines for training, testing, and competing. Let me mention that we have scheduled three training seminars to showcase our talented instructors, just to name a few.

Seizan: *Most of our members who interacted with Nishiyama Sensei have felt a profound sense*

of loss for his passing. Could you briefly describe your relationship with Nishiyama Sensei and what you felt was his strongest influence on you?

Shimoji: Sensei helped me to understand the process of teaching myself in order to sustain my own personal development in Traditional Karate.

Q & A Cont. on page 4.



Current Events: The First AAKF National Seminar A Resounding Success



Laurie Elliott of the N Central region at the First AAKF National Seminar.



The First AAKF Technical Committee National Seminar held in Dallas, TX on March 27, 2010, was greeted with an overwhelming response from the Southwestern members of the AAKF. Members nationwide also attended. Senseis Robert Fursaro, Toru Shimoji, Mahmoud Tabassi, Albert Cheah, Tim Hanlon, Alex Tong, and Brad Webb provided instructions to a gymnasium-packed audience at the University of Texas at Dallas. Mr. Fusaro emphasized hip connection in body dynamics, Mr. Shimoji focused on the relationship of body core, and Mr. Tabassi reviewed the key contributions of body center control. Mr. Cheah and Dr. Hanlon discussed the importance of core muscle control for optimizing kata performance. Dr. Tong addressed the use of breathing for synchronizing muscle actions in technique applications and Mr. Webb introduced training exercises to improve kumite techniques. Overall, participants felt energized by the highly informative sessions. The Technical Committee members expressed their appreciation for members' enthusiastic support and look forward to opportunities to relate their technical insights in future National Seminars.

For additional comments on this Seminar, please see "Perspectives"

Upcoming Events, 2010

June:
9-12

49th AAKF National Championship & AAKF 2010 National Camp, SeaTac, WA
SeaTac Community Center, 13735 24th Ave. South, SeaTac, WA 98168

Board of Directors Meeting and Technical Board Meeting

July:
TBA

International Traditional Karate Federation Summer Camp
San Diego, California

October:
TBA

AAKF National Seminar in Washington, DC.
Location TBA

National Team Training Program and Athlete Development

Board of Directors Meeting and Technical Board Meeting

November:
9-12

ITKF World Traditional Karate Championships
Curitiba, Brazil



Vince Nistico of the Pacific Northwest region at the First National Seminar



AAKF Technical Committee voting members (front: Shimoji, Cheah, Webb, Tong. Back: Tabassi, Fusaro, Hanlon).

Perspectives: The AAKF National Seminar A Personal View

On March 27th this year a meeting of historic importance for the martial arts took place at the University of Texas-Dallas, hosted by the JKA Dallas and the AAKF South-western Region. I attended the seminar, and as a long-time student with more enthusiasm and years than talent and time I was curious to see how the Shotokan school would handle the great transition that the seminar marked.

Robert Fusaro, Mahmoud Tabassi, Toru Shimoji, Albert Cheah, Dr. Tim Hanlon, Brad Webb and Alex Tong, the sensei of the Dallas club, presented, one after another, the distilled wisdom of perhaps two centuries of training, competition, and meditation. These were the true secrets of the art, presented in action and in training exercises, with remarkable clarity and

new insight, by some of the finest athlete-artists in the world.

Each sensei built upon the work and ideas of the others. In a normal karate seminar each of these instructors would give profound knowledge and inspiration; but when the same basic yet subtle principles were illuminated in very different styles, metaphors, and physical action, suddenly karate seemed to spring from two into three dimensions, from the flat to the round. I learned approaches and methods that not only promised to improve my techniques, but also to avoid certain kinds of injury, and most important personally, to deepen my understanding of karate into the period of old age.

What was especially helpful was the creation of special sessions in which students both beginning and expert could ask

questions individually of the instructors, and thus to get to know them and have them address the personal training needs of each questioner.

It seemed to some of us that the deep devotion of the leadership to teaching and to the art of karate itself had overwhelmed the traditional fiery independence and desire for precedence of the great masters. That spirit, though admirable and necessary in so competitive an art, has tended to prevent karate from speaking in a single voice. Perhaps the model of karate governance was changing from monarchy to a sort of democratic meritocracy, from rivalry in ranking to friendly and cooperative competition in excellence.

Whatever the further outcome of this meeting, the students were the beneficiaries, and we look forward to a new era of vitality in the fine old art of karate.

To see the entire article, visit aakf.org



*Article by
Frederick Turner*

Professor Frederick Turner is a writer, poet, and professor of arts and humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD). He serves as faculty adviser of the UTD Karate Club. He has been training in karate since 1981 and in Shotokan since 1984, and holds a second dan black belt.

AAKF Member Spotlight: Sensei Robert Fusaro

Master Robert L. Fusaro is one of the first Americans to receive his 7th degree black belt in 1992. He began his karate study in Japan just after the Korean War in 1955. An American friend invited him to a karate class at the Japan Karate Association headquarters. He decided to join, not realizing it was to become a lifelong passion.

While training in Japan he had the distinct honor

of participating in the first Japan Karate Association (JKA) tournament held in 1957, where he and seven other non-Japanese students demonstrated semi-free sparring. He also remembers seeing Master Funakoshi seated as an honored guest in the front of the dojo floor while students were demonstrating for him. It would be many years later that the impact of that moment would sink in,

realizing that he had actually seen Master Funakoshi and been present at such a historical time in karate.

Mr. Fusaro received his *shodan* in 1959 from Master Masatoshi Nakayama. Fusaro's first school, the Twin Cities School of Karate, was located in the basement of his parents' home.



*Sensei
Robert Fusaro*



*"Master
Fusaro's goal
has always
been to teach
Karate to
anyone willing
to learn."*

Robert Fursaro

Spotlight Continued

He later opened his first dojo in downtown Minneapolis in 1960. By then karate had become a passion for Fusaro and he set himself the goal of becoming a master. He teaches five accredited karate courses at the University of Minnesota since 1965. His dojo, Midwest Karate of Minneapolis, has graduated hundreds of black belts and is located near downtown Minneapolis on Hennepin Avenue. Those who have witnessed recent demonstrations by Mr. Fusaro would be amazed by the tremendous power and speed generated by this septuagenarian. Sensei Fusaro currently serves as Senior Counsel of the AAKF Technical Committee, and Senior Advisor of the AAKF Executive Board of Directors. Master Fusaro's goal has always been to teach

karate to anyone willing to learn, and he has often compromised his time, money and personal life to achieve that goal. But that is what makes him truly unique among martial arts instructors. Teaching karate is not really a job to him, it is a way of life that he truly enjoys.

To see the entire article, visit aakf.org.

Q & A Continued



*"Anything can be
accomplished
through proper
perspective,
persistent effort,
and a positive
attitude."*

Toru Shimoji

He taught me that there is no limit in life, and anything can be accomplished through proper perspective, persistent effort and a positive attitude.

Seizan: *Some time ago, you took a sabbatical to Okinawa to seek the roots of traditional karate. What is your overall impression of the similarities and differences between Okinawan and Japanese karate-do, and how does this experience influence your teaching and your role as the leader of the AAKF?*

Shimoji: It was an amazing experience to go back to Okinawa where I was born and study Karate in an old-fashion way. I studied under Kuba Yoshio Sensei of Goju-ryu. Coming from Nishiyama Sensei's style of learning, I was more interested in figuring out how Kuba

Sensei studied Kata. Another thing I learned was the concept of "muri ni shinai," which is a common Japanese colloquial expression, "don't push too hard." It took a while for me to understand this but I realized that you have to incorporate the softer aspect of moving and thinking in order to balance our overall Karate experience, and life for that matter.

Seizan: What do you anticipate as the highest gratification and challenge during your tenure as President of AAKF?

Shimoji: To be a part of this great organization at such a critical junction is my utmost joy. It took us about a year after Sensei's passing to sort out our differences and priorities, but now we are all working together for a common cause. Of course

there are challenges, especially in this first stage of reformation where we have to explain to many regional leaders and members the benefits to AAKF involvement and the possibility of bright future through our renewed efforts.

To see the entire interview, visit aakf.org



Technical Notes: The Paradox of Outside Tension Stances and Its Relationship to Power Generation

Introduction. Shotokan Karate uses stances to deliver techniques, which include punching, striking, and blocking. These stances are divided into two broad categories: inside tension stances and outside tension stances. The generally utilized outside tension stances include forward stance (zen-kutsu dachi), back stance (kokutsu - dachi), straddle leg stance (kiba-dachi), and rooted stance (Sochin-dachi). For the purpose of this discussion, our attention will be primarily directed toward *zen-kutsu dachi*, as it is the most fundamental of our stances, but the principles to be discussed apply equally to all these four outside tension stances.

The purpose of the stance structure of shotokan karate 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 such as punching, striking and blocking. In order 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.

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.

The development of power. For the purposes of this discussion, *gyaku-zuki* will be used to demonstrate the principles of power generation, though the concepts apply to virtually all karate techniques. $\text{Force} = \text{mass} \times \text{acceleration}$. In order to increase force generated we must increase either mass or acceleration. Since acceleration is the rate of change of velocity, we very quickly learn that the speed of the technique is of the utmost importance in power generation. Stances, in effect, allow us to, in some complex way, alter our mass at the instant of impact by transmitting the power of the large, lower body mass to the upper body to be delivered to the target. But, stances must not interfere with the other component of force generation--speed, and therefore lower body motion, which tends to be slower (larger mass) must be perfectly timed to the upper body motion. Rotation, of utmost importance in the



Article by
J. Timothy Hanlon, MD

"The purpose of the stance structure of shotokan karate is to maximize power."

Tim Hanlon, MD

Technical Notes Continued

"Inside tension, maximized at the instant of kime', stabilizes the stance more completely than can ever be achieved without its use."

Tim Hanlon, MD



Nishiyama Sensei and the author discussing proper execution of soto uke (picture by Terry Underhill)

performance of *gyaku-zuki*, must terminate as abruptly and in perfect synchrony with the fist to properly utilize this lower body energy in performing this fundamental technique. It is through the utilization of inside tension in *zen-kutsu dachi* that speed and precise termination of rotation can be achieved.

Inside tension. The outside tension stances benefit from the added utilization of inside tension in several ways. Such tension produced by the adductors and internal rotators of the thigh provide the basis for stance translation, that is, the movement from one stance to another. This principle is learned early on in training, but the use of inside tension to maximize power is only slowly acquired over years of diligent training.

We need to include the use of the thigh adductors and internal rotators in the generation of inside tension in stationary stance for the purpose of utilizing the rotational power of the hips to its maximal potential (speed of rotation and abruptness of termination of the rotation so that it may exactly coincide with the fist termination in *gyaku-zuki*). Inside tension, maximized at the instant of *kime'*, stabilizes the stance more completely than can ever be achieved without its use, and allows

the stance connection or density to be completely utilized. Density is that quality of *kime'* which allows compression of the body into the floor at impact, in a sense the utilization of dropping power at impact which is only possible with the use of inside tension.

Execution and training.

In order to utilize inside tension, we must actively squeeze the inner thighs together. In rotation, this squeezing of the inner thighs must initiate the rotation process to impart speed to the rotation. The thigh adductors can contract swifter than the other muscle groups that participate in the rotation process, and thereby can perceptibly alter the speed of rotation. The process of contracting the inner thigh muscles continues throughout the rotation and maximizes and "connects" to the entire muscular *kime'* process. The sharp termination of rotation largely depends on the inner thigh muscles and their use at the instant of *kime'*, actively squeezing the legs together acts to immediately stop the rotation much as a door jam stops a swinging door. We should actively practice this methodology to achieve a faster and more quickly terminating rotation.

From a practical standpoint, we must understand the dynamics of the use of inside

tension in the process of hip rotation. 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

Technical Notes Continued

straight line power, and discussed, it must be the increased connection acknowledged that in of the stance made outside tension stances possible by the counter the primary action is balance of the outside outside tension produced tension of the opposing by active contraction of buttocks musculature the muscles of the allowing a dropping sensation at the moment of inner thigh only provides kime' (density). It is also the necessary counter-obvious that the same balance to this outside inside tension is necessary tension---a dynamic when moving (translation) balance between opposing from one outside tension muscle groups, thus stance to another. providing a degree of

Though the use of stance stability otherwise inside tension in *zen-kutsu* not obtainable without this *dachi* provides significant inner thigh contribution. additional benefit as

Excerpted from 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 Northwest and AAKF Chief Medical Judge.

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"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"

Tim Hanlon, MD



First AAKF National Seminar, Dallas, TX; Mar 27, 2010

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First AAKF National Seminar, Dallas, TX; Mar 27, 2010

AAKF Election Results:

AAKF officers and Technical Board Members. Election results from the January, 2010 Board of Directors meeting in Orange County, CA, are as follows:

Board of Directors***Senior Advisory Committee:***

Robert Fusaro
Robert Graves

Board of Directors:

Toru Shimoji, President
Albert Cheah, Vice President
Alex Tong, Secretary
Mahmoud Tabassi, Treasurer
Robert Fusaro
Tim Hanlon
John Linkletter
Tony Milevsky
Chris Smaby
Zack Stewart

Executive Director

Janice Tori

Committees:**Finance**

Mahmoud Tabassi (Chairman)
John Bell
Alex Tong
Janice Tori

Membership

Executive Director
(Chairperson)
Executive Board

Tournament & Seminar

Robert Fusaro (Co-Chair)
Albert Cheah (Co-Chair):
Bradley Webb

Website

Janice Tori (Chairperson)
Allan Heaton
Zack Stewart

Technical Board***Senior Council:***

Robert Fusaro
Robert Graves
Mahmoud Tabassi

Junior Council:

Albert Cheah
Tim Hanlon
Toru Shimoji
Alex Tong
Bradley Webb
Ron Vance

Avi Rokah
Maria Teresa Eugenio
Vince Nistico
Taijiro Kaijima

Publication & Marketing

Alex Tong (Chairman)
Janice Tori
Bradley Webb
Amy Young

Dispute Resolution

Toru Shimoji (Chairman)
Senior Advisory Council
Executive Board of Directors

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