

# SKIF -USA Newsletter



A publication of  
SKIF-USA

## KANCHO KANAZAWA AND NOBUAKI SENSEI

### TOUR USA IN 2007

Kancho Kanazawa and Nobuaki Kanazawa Sensei  
Seminar June 16 & 17, 2007 Rochester, NH

By James Shea

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Saturday June 16, 2007

Warm ups by Nobuaki Sensei (these seem to stay the same at most of the classes, camps and seminars I have attended), However, Nobuaki sensei, did have some interesting nuances for the cool downs that he did.

Kancho took the black belts and Nobuaki sensei took the kyu levels.

Kancho began by teaching mawashi uke.

Then he proceeded to explain and demonstrate one of the variations of the yondan and above grading kihon. (I have written down 14 variations that I have seen Kancho demonstrate and use at gradings and trainings). Often the one he is working on during the seminar is the one that he will choose for the grading but not always and he has changed it for the exam. Throwing some off who only practice one or two variations or the one Kancho is reviewing at the time of the seminar.

Step forward zenkutsu dachi -chudan oizuki, step back kokutsu dachi - shuto

uke, step over (driving of the heel) into zenkutsu dachi - gyaku zuki, shift into fudo dachi - gedan barai (be careful that you do it in one count but make sure hips come back with wrist twist (gedan barai). Step forward into fudo dachi- chudan oizuki (make sure you do not move your front foot until stepping foot is past the pivot foot), step back into fudo dachi- chudan oizuki, pivot clockwise into kidadachi - enpi uchi, (the hand that was on the hip or lower hand goes under as the arms cross), pivot again going same direction kidadachi - enpi uchi (becomes full circle), again making sure that the hand on the hip/ lower hand goes under. Same side gedan barai - nekoashi dachi, turn into sanchin dachi - mawashi -uke, (turn on tip of toes to become back foot, relax front knee and sink so front foot straightens), step forward again into sanchin dachi - mawashi -uke. Start on on right side. (Then do other side). Kancho explains, "The secret is you are blocking and moving same time for everything. Not moving hand onto shoulder for shuto uke then stepping back into kokutsu dachi, moving and stepping same time. Not moving just hand and then foot or other way around if you want to move hip

back as in gedan barai not moving hip back as you bring up hand, same time hand and hip, harmony in movement for this kihon is the key." Working on many variations also is important, otherwise, it becomes difficult to adjust to any changes asked for during training or grading.

Nobuaki Sensei took the dan grades started with kihon: nidan, sandan grading syllabus.

#### Zenkutsu dachi Kamae

kizami zuki, slide back (suri ashi) gedan barai, step forward oizuki.

Kizami zuki, slide back gedan barai, slide forward kizami zuki – gyaku zuki

Kizami zuki, slide back 45 degrees – gedan barai, step forward 45 degrees mae geri – jodan oi zuki.

Kizami zuki, pull back front foot  $\frac{1}{4}$  step – chudan haiwan uke, slide forward gyaku zuki

Kizami zuki, pull back front foot a  $\frac{1}{4}$  step – chudan haiwan uke, spinning (tenshin) jodan uraken – gyaku zukil

(All the movements' front and back can have a little slide to them.; #'s 1 and 2 small direct gedan barai, #3 bigger gedan barai).



Target practice - partner work – partner off opposite side – partner hold out hand for target

Mawashi geri with (furi geri) cutting action not snapping back put foot down to the front at 45 degrees to the back as if going to kick ushiro geri. By count 5 times, then no count 5 times; other side, change partners.

Same as number one, then add kizami yoko geri with kekomi feeling even though distance is short.

Same as number one then add ushiro geri  
Kata

Jiin & Bassai Sho by count, then slowly no count, then no count at speed.



## Kanazawa Kancho and Sensei Nobuaki Minnesota, 2007 By Lynda Crimmins

Summer is the best time to visit Minnesota – no snow! We couldn't have asked for better weather either for Kanazawa Kancho and Sensei Nobuaki's visit.

Our seminars started with an Advanced (black & brown belt) session on Tuesday afternoon. Kancho lead this session with basics and then juyi ippon kumite, right side only. As he noted several times, "I know you can do left side (normal side) very well, now work right side". He did let us practice #5 Jodan on the left side though! He ended the session by asking Clay Morton to demonstrate his award winning Gojushiho-Sho. It is always fun to watch Clay perform but we also had the pleasure of watching Kancho work with Clay and 'tweak' the kata.

Our Tuesday evening session was lead by Sensei Nobuaki. This was an all level class and children attended the first hour. During this time, we covered mostly basics. After the children left, we moved onto different kicking combinations and take downs.

Sensei Nobuaki lead our Wednesday Advanced session where we continued working on partner based kicking combinations. Although practicing these combinations was fun, the best part was watching Sensei Nobuaki demonstrate them for us. His control, balance, and agility are simply amazing!

Our seminars wrapped up with one final all levels session lead by Kanazawa Kancho. This session was split between kihon ippon and kata. Each of the different kyu ranks practiced their kata. The Blacks in attendance practiced Sochin and Gojushiho-Sho. The night ended with dan testing for a small group (all passed!).

Midweek seminars can be hard to draw a large attendance but that can work out to be an advantage as well. Although small, we had 10-15 people at the Black/Brown belt sessions and 20-30 people for the all levels classes. The smaller groups made it easier for everyone to observe Kancho which gave us the feeling of having more personal/individual instruction.

It wasn't all work while they were here! We had a welcome dinner for Kancho & Sensei Nobuaki Tuesday evening. And they had a 'free' day on Thursday.

With a variety of options to choose from, they wanted to go to the Mall of America. Both were quite impressed by the size of the Mall. Kancho was amazed to see an amusement park (with roller coasters) inside! We all enjoyed several hours of shopping, walking and people watching.

As always we are honored to have an opportunity to host Kanazawa Kancho and Sensei Nobuaki. Maybe next time, we can show Kancho we know the right side as well as our left side!



## SKIF Pan American Championships 2007 San Jose, Costa Rica By Clay Morton

A small but strong contingent from the United States traveled to Costa Rica to represent the country and participate in the Pan American Championships. The eight members of the team consisted of Lynda Crimins of Minnesota, Clay Morton from Mississippi, Jimmy Wong of Florida, Wayne Shockness of California, Paul Danos of Florida, Manny Da Costa from Texas, Ian and Michael FungQuee from New York, and Jim Shea from Massachusetts serving as the team coach. Every competitor performed well and represented their country, dojo, and family in a superb manner. From these eight members five medals were won. Lynda Crimins won a third in kata with a very nice performance of Chinte. Wayne Shockness outperformed several opponents before eventually losing in a truly exciting final match verse Mexico to win a second place. Manny Da Costa won a third place in the same division as Mr. Shockness with strong technique and good timing. Clay Morton won a first place in kata with a strong performance of Gojushiho Sho. Ian FungQuee won a third place in kata with a very nice performance of Jion. Kancho himself mentioned to Mr. Shea that he was happy that USA team had such a strong showing and handled themselves in a respectful manner throughout the tournament.

On Thursday before the tournament started, Kancho and his son Diazo taught three seminars to a truly packed audience. They went over basics of kata and kumite and the finer points of more advanced katas.

In addition to the karate portion of the trip, there was several sight seeing experiences. The La Paz Waterfall gardens were a spectacular display of five different waterfalls ranging in height from 75 to 140 feet. There were showcases of indigenous snakes, frogs, butterflies, and birds. Several members went on a canopy tour which is a zip line connecting 10 platforms through the rain forest at heights of between 50 and 60 feet in the air. The combination of karate and sight-seeing along with the development of new friends made this trip an ultimate success for all who participated. Hopefully, even more people will decide to experience this great event in 2010 when the Pan American Championships will be held in the Dominican Republic.



## Kata Rhythm VS. Move Timing

By Clay Morton

Rhythm or tempo is one of the most important components of kata but also one of the most misunderstood. Once the moves are learned in the proper order with the proper emphasis on application, the rhythm comes into question. This is what makes the kata interesting as well as how a person makes the kata their own. When I say make it their own, I am referring to making the kata a personal expression of themselves. This is a demanding task, but when it is accomplished the person has great success with the kata because the athlete looks at home doing each move. It is theirs and they are at ease.

Rhythm is commonly misunderstood because it is two separate components and people tend to make it one. The first is how fast the athlete does each move. This is the time it takes an athlete to start a specific move until the end of that move. For example, it is how fast the athlete performs a gedan barai or mae geri. The second component is the time between the end of one move until the start of the next move. Both are equally important in developing a good rhythm in a kata. When an athlete performs a kata with bad tempo, the kata is dull and boring. If a musician played the same note with the same time spacing between each note for three minutes, it would be extremely boring and actually would not be called music at all. Songs are exciting and dramatic because the artist changes the notes, changes the timing between each note, and changes the intensity of each note. This draws the listener into the song and captivates the listener. The same thing happens with kata. When a karateka performs the kata with dramatic changes in intensity, changes the speed of each move, and changes the timing between each move, the audience and the judges are brought into the performance, which is a sign of a great competitor.

Let's look closer at each component. Most people perform each move in either one of two speeds: fast or slow. The key is that not all fast moves have to be at 100% speed and not all slow moves have to be done at the same slow speed. If there is a sequence of four fast moves and the fourth is a punch, the athlete can perform move 1, 2, and 3 at 90% of full capacity and the fourth at 100% of full capacity. This shows that the punch is the emphasis or "killing blow". It will give the sequence a new meaning and a new more aggressive appearance. A slow move can be started in a dynamic fashion at 50% of full capacity. This speed lasts only for the first 10-20 degrees of the move and then the move slows down to the regular slow speed. This gives the move a new appearance, and it also provides the athlete with a more realistic feel of fighting someone.

The timing between the end of one move and the start of another move is the next component to be manipulated. This timing is a function of control. Control can be defined as starting a movement, moving, and stopping the movement. This control is important because it helps give the contrast between moving and stopping. An example is at the end of one move, everything is totally stopped (totally still like a statue). From total stillness the move explodes and continues to move unimpeded until the end of the move when it stops. At the point where the athlete stops, their body becomes totally still again. So, the athlete goes from 100% still-

ness to 100% movement to 100% stillness. When an athlete performs a move in this manner, it is fantastic. The athlete shows control of his body, control of timing, and control of his intention.

Not all moves have the same intent. If a block precedes a punch, the block is not the finishing blow therefore it does not have the same emphasis or intent as a punch. Any time there is an emphasis, "killing blow", or kiai, there needs to be a major pause which is a pause that is longer than the average pause after an average move. For the rest of the moves, groups of moves should be put together. Usually in most katas, similar moves either come in pairs or fours. These should be clustered together. This means that the timing between the moves start longer and gradually get smaller building to a climax. The last move in the sequence ends with a longer pause. For example in Kanku Dai, after move 9 hold for a 2 count. After move 10 hold for a 1 count, and after move 11 hold for a ½ count. Move 12 is a kiai, which means that it has a major pause after it. This will give the sequence a different look that will make it more exciting.

Rhythm will not and cannot be the same for everyone. No two people are the same and no two bodies work in the same precise manner. A female generates power differently than a male, just as a 125-pound male will generate power differently than a 180-pound male. So, there are no set guidelines for timing such as hold for a set number of seconds for a specific move. Although, there is a general rule that the faster the athlete performs each move, the longer or more definite the pause has to be to show the contrast of fast and slow.

Karate-do is a way of life. When an athlete has trained for many years, and they look back on their history, they will see that they traveled down a path learning important lessons on the way and meeting interesting people. Kata is a micro version of karate. It, too, is a path to understanding. It is understanding the moves, the applications, the rhythm, the body mechanics, and the developing body awareness. The more you practice a kata, the more advanced each of these items gets. Gichin Funakoshi Sensei said, "To know a kata is to do it 20,000 times." There is nothing inherently special with the number 20,000. But how many of us can say that we have done a kata 20,000 times? Not many. Even if we have done a kata 20,000 times, the kata will never be perfect. The perfect kata is unattainable, an enigma. The goal is to reduce the errors until they are so small that only a few experienced people can identify them. There is always something to improve on which is what makes kata so interesting and challenging. The key point is that tournaments are just another training aid to hone a karate-ka's abilities and character. Tournaments are not the end goal just as punching makiwara or doing plyometrics are not the end goal. The message of all the masters has been to train, train, and train. Train in the dojo or on a subway. Every second of every day can be training of some sort. From these ordinary moments of training, come extraordinary levels of personal knowledge and awareness of self, which is a big step in the perfecting of one's kata and one's character.

## *Lessons With The Master* A “Must Read” for Serious SKIF Members

By Glenn Stoddard, 6<sup>th</sup> Dan, Kyoshi  
SKIF-USA General Secretary

Whenever serious karate students have asked me to recommend books they should read on karate I have always listed Kancho Kanazawa's books, as well as a few others, including C.W. Nicol's famous book, *Moving Zen*. For me, *Moving Zen* has always been a favorite because it describes the author's experiences studying karate at the old JKA Honbu Dojo in Tokyo under Sensei Kanazawa and other famous JKA Shotokan sensei in the early 1960s. However, as good as it is, *Moving Zen* is now considered dated by many younger karateka who find it hard to relate to events that took place in the 1960s, before DVDs and the internet. Moreover, it was about training at the old JKA Honbu Dojo, not about training in Japan at the modern SKIF Honbu Dojo.

Thanks to Sensei Paul Walker of California, however, we now have a new book that has some of the best elements of *Moving Zen* but also contains a wealth of detailed and up-to-date practical information for SKIF members and instructors. This new book is entitled *Lessons With The Master* and it was written by Sensei Paul Walker, who currently lives and teaches karate in California. The book centers on Sensei Walker's experiences training at the SKIF Honbu dojo under Kancho Kanazawa and other high-level SKIF instructors for three years during the 1990s—about 30 years after the period of time described in *Moving Zen*.

In my opinion, *Lessons With The Master* is a terrific book and is a “must read” for serious SKIF members. It is particularly valuable for yudansha (black belts) and instructors. This is because, although it does present a great amount of general information about karate training Japan—as is the case with *Moving Zen*—*Lessons With The Master* presents much more detailed information on karate training, teaching, grading, culture, and etiquette. As such, it includes information that is simply not available from any other book. What's more, the information in this book is specific to Shotokan karate as taught by Kancho Kanazawa and the SKIF. However, the book has something more for everyone with a passion for karate, regardless of rank or organizational affiliation.

The book has ten chapters and a four-section appendix with excellent reference materials. In total it has 572 pages, including a detailed index. The first chapter is nine pages long and is entitled “Karate at the Honbu Dojo.” It describes the SKIF headquarters dojo in Tokyo, the etiquette and conduct followed there, the social life, how Sensei Walker was able to fit in while training there, and other observations by Sensei Walker. This chapter, in itself, is fascinating and would be worth the price of the book, particularly for anyone planning a trip to Japan for karate training. In the second chapter, Sensei Walker discusses and

breaks down “lesson components.” Here, there is a detailed discussion of the formal etiquette, warm up, kihon, kata, and kumite as conducted in regular training at the dojo. In addition, this chapter discusses conditioning, target training, partner work, group work, explanation and demonstration of techniques, the dojo-kun, and use of makiwara and weapons.

Chapter three explains why Sensei Walker kept a detailed training diary in Japan and how he kept his diary. It is useful background and provides a good template for anyone planning to keep such a diary. Chapter four is a short chapter that presents ten excellent training tips with discussion. These tips apply to life in general as well as to karate training and they are a nice addition to the book. Chapter five is entitled “Teaching Tips.” This chapter should be a real value to karate instructors. Chapter six presents a series of ten lessons for specific objectives and it should also be of real value to instructors.

In chapter seven, Sensei Walker describes the backgrounds and teaching styles of each of the official SKIF instructors who assisted Kancho Kanazawa or taught when Kancho was away during the time when Sensei Walker was training at the Honbu Dojo. It thus discusses: Ichihara Sensei, Murakami Sensei, Suzuki Sensei, Tanaka Sensei, and Nobuaki Kanazawa Sensei. Chapter eight discusses the top ten favorite lessons Sensei Walker had at the Honbu Dojo during his three years of training there, including a description of the subject matter covered and the knowledge and inspiration he gained from each lesson.

Chapter nine is the longest chapter and is, in effect, the heart of the book. It outlines the material covered in each of the 279 lessons Sensei Walker participated in at the SKIF Honbu Dojo while in Japan. Each lesson was different, and the author describes the subjects covered and the instructors who taught the lessons. In addition, for many lessons there are notes which contain valuable information about special points made during the lessons. For instructors, this chapter is a reference that could be used for planning hundreds of different lessons. The final chapter is entitled “Grading Notes.” This chapter describes Sensei Walker's dan gradings under Kancho Kanazawa for the Nidan, Sandan, and Yondan levels. It provides some interesting information about Sensei Walker's personal dan grading experiences under Kancho Kanazawa.

The book also has a four section appendix, as follows. Appendix A includes the SKIF grading syllabi and system from beginner level through Godan; Appendix B contains a Japanese-English glossary of common terminology; Appendix C contains an example of a “Rotating Curriculum” for training; and Appendix D contains a listing of additional resources, including a list of suggested books, videos/DVDs, and websites.

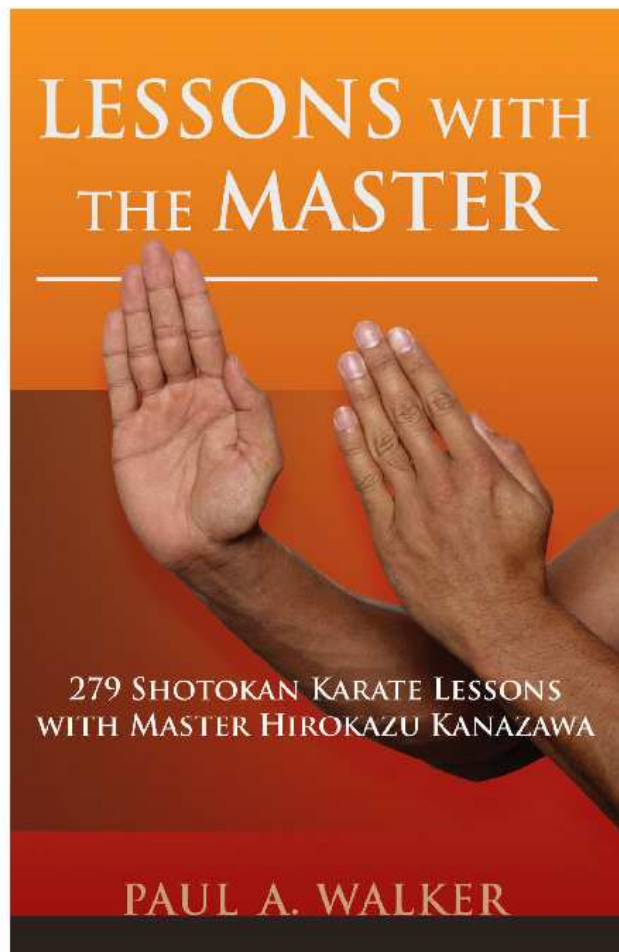
*Lessons With The Master* is available online from iUniverse publishing and retails for \$33.95, plus shipping. It is well worth the price and I highly recommend it to all SKIF members! To order call 1-800-AUTHORS or order online from [www.iUniverse.com](http://www.iUniverse.com) (See enclosed advertisement.)

# Just Published...

## Lessons with the Master

279 Shotokan Karate Lessons with Master Hirokazu Kanazawa

Author: Paul Walker



This karate guide serves as an invaluable reference source for all karate practitioners and includes sample lessons, teaching tips, training drills, and much more!

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## Kata Practice

By Clay Morton

Each kata has its own identity, and was created to build and demonstrate different characteristics. Over the hundreds of years of development each kata has developed a reputation—Sochin demonstrates a rooted stance and has the characteristics of power and strong movements, but Gyankaku means, “crane on a rock” and has the characteristics of balance, agility, and speed with the yoko keage at its core. So an athlete has to pick the kata and understand what he must create in each different one. If the athlete does Sochin in a fast snappy way, it will not look right, nor is that what the kata was intended to look like. If he does not have the characteristics that each kata demands, then he must work diligently to obtain them before he will have success with the kata.

There are countless ways to practice and work on kata. In my opinion kata is a study of precision. It is precision in body placement, body mechanics, and timing. The only way to develop precision in the whole kata is to practice precision in each individual move. The kata should be broken down to the individual moves. Each move is practiced and improved in all areas: speed, power, technique, body placement, and body mechanics. Each move is worked on until the athlete or the instructor feels it is better and correct. Then the athlete moves to the next move. To do this correctly the athlete must be truthful to themselves that they will not accept mediocrity, which means that they will not move to the next move until the current one is correct.

After each move of the kata has been worked on, the athlete starts grouping the moves together in segments of 3-4 moves. These segments are practiced in the same manner. When the whole kata has been practiced this way, the segments are lengthened to 7-8 moves, then to ¼ of the kata, to ½ of the kata, and finally the whole kata always seeking precision in each move and segment.

Besides practicing the moves on their own, the athlete can use a principle called “overwhelm” to train. To do this the karate-ka takes whatever he is working on and do it in a way that makes it much harder than just doing it in the kata. Do the move with a 20-pound weight vest on to increase leg strength and endurance. Wear resistance rubber bands around the ankles and do the move. Put hand and ankle weights on and perform the move. Do the move with your eyes closed or do the move on your knees. The key is to do the move any way that you can think of to make it harder. As you are training in this harder manner, constantly observe the details that you are trying to improve upon. Once you do the move in this overwhelm manner with repetition, your body starts to adapt to doing it the harder way. So, when you perform the move in the kata, it is extremely easy and the moves are faster and stronger than before

In my opinion this is the best way to practice kata. Each detail can be focused on and corrected. The athlete breaks the kata down to its foundation: each single move. He perfects each move and then slowly rebuilds the kata steadily improving it until it looks much better than before he began. If the moves of the kata are only practiced while performing the whole kata, there are too many moves for the athlete to concentrate on besides the set of moves that he wants to improve. It is much easier and more effective to work on each specific move and then build the kata back together. Even a kata of 50-60 moves, which is too long to focus on all at once, can be effectively improved in this manner.



### 26 Kata Video is now on DVD

This DVD contains the 26 katas of Shotokan Karate demonstrated by Kancho Kanazawa. Easy to use menus to help navigate to the needed kata. Available in our catalogue at [www.skifusa.com](http://www.skifusa.com)

See all of the SKIF-USA merchandise catalogue online at: [www.skifusa.com](http://www.skifusa.com)



Molding the future of karate

The newsletter staff would like to thank all of those who have contributed to this quarters Newsletter.

If you have an article that you would like to contribute please email it to: [skifusa@comcast.net](mailto:skifusa@comcast.net)