

SKIF -USA Newsletter



A publication of
SKIF-USA

Many SKIF Karate Training & Competition Events Planned for 2008

By Glenn Stoddard and Lynda Crimmins

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There will be numerous traditional karate training and competition opportunities for SKIF-USA members here in the United States and in other countries during 2008. At this time, SKIF-USA is aware of the following list of events, which we hope will be helpful in your planning:

Ozawa Cup

March 22nd-March 23rd
Las Vegas, Nevada

Dr. Clay Morton, Current SKIF Men's Senior Division World Kata Champion, will be conducting a kata seminar on Friday, March 21st

Go to www.ozawacup.com for registration and seminar details.

NE Yudansha Seminar

March 15
Longmeadow, MA
10:30 - 2:30

Contacts:

Jim Shea: jpsnema@yahoo.com
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Open World Kanazawa Cup

May 2nd - 4th
SKIF Ukraine

Go to www.skif-ukraine.com for regis-

tration and seminar details.

ISKF Masters Camp

June 7th-12th

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Kancho Kanazawa will again be a special guest instructor

(Note: ISKF is not directly affiliated with SKIF but SKIF members are invited to participate in this camp)

Kancho Kanazawa's 2008 USA Tour, Bahamas Special Training & Canadian Visit

(Note: Kancho Kanazawa will be accompanied by his oldest son, Nobuaki Kanazawa Sensei, at the following events)

June 14th-15th - Rochester, New Hampshire, SKIF-USA Seminar

June 17th-18th - New Brighton, Minnesota, SKIF-USA Seminar

June 21st-22nd - Houston, Texas, SKIF- USA Seminar

June 24th-26th - Nassau Bahamas, SKIF International Training Camp
(Note: This will be an international

training camp and other international SKIF instructors, including Manabu Murakami Sensei and Hiroshi Ishikawa Sensei are expected to attend and teach along with Kancho Kanazawa and Nobuaki Sensei)

June 28th-29th—San Jose, CA, SKI-USF Seminar

July 1st-July 6th – Nanaimo, British Columbia, SKIF Seminar

SKIF-USA National Tournament

September 26th-28th
Miami, Florida

(Registration details for all of the above events to follow)

SKIF 30th Anniversary Celebration

Tokyo, Japan
October 23rd-24th

Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium
Training Seminars and Special Dan Grading with Kancho Kanazawa

October 25th
Keio Plaza

SKIF 30th Anniversary and Kancho Kanazawa's 77th Birthday Celebration.

(Additional details will become available at a later date)

More information about the above events will be posted as it becomes available on the SKIF-USA "Events" page, at www.skifusa.com. Keep watching the SKIF-USA website for more information. Enjoy your year of seminars and tournaments!

Note: SKIF-USA is interested in posting information on events sponsored by SKIF members or which may be of interest to SKIF members. Please send appropriate event information to us via email for posting, at skifusa@comcast.net.

SKIF Friends Across the Border By Mike Cook

Approximately 150 people attended two days of Karate training under 8th Dan, Fujishima Sensei co-sponsored by SKIF-Quebec and Montreal. Saturday's seminar and Dan testing was held in St Cesaire, Quebec with Roger LaGace' Sensei and Sunday's training session was held in Montreal as guests of Rick Val and Michel Hurtubise Sensei and their Verdun Shotokan Dojo. Training was very inclusive and covered all aspects of the SKIF syllabus. A fantastic dinner Saturday night was held at a very prestigious restaurant in Montreal, overlooking the entire city. Fujishima Sensei was given a tour of the city's sights and landmarks before flying back to California.



Pictured: Mike Cook-Maine, Penny Karposky-California, Fujishima Sensei - California, Roger LaGace' - Quebec, Alison Chakoumakos-New Mexico.

SKIF 2007 Northeast Regional Tournament By Mike Cook

The Maine Shotokan Karate Association hosted an SKIF-USA Northeast/New England Regional Qualifying Tournament on October 27, 2007 at the Westcott Junior High School Gymnasium in Westbrook, Maine (an abutting town to Portland!)

After coming back all excited and energized from the 9th World SKIF Tournament in Tokyo, Japan, Michele Farwell, one of my assistant Sensei and Yudansha associated with my Dojo, suggested that we host a tournament in the Fall of 2007 to give other SKIF Karate-ka, children and adults alike, an opportunity to experience and get acquainted with a traditional Karate tournament event and also to give those more experienced and tournament veterans another opportunity to hone their skills in anticipation of the 10th World SKIF Tournament scheduled to be held in Athens, Greece in 2009.

During the Winter and Spring of 2007, we met several times and worked out the logistics and the division of assignments needed to be completed in order to have everything in place and a poster ready for public announcement at the June 2006 Kanazawa Kancho Seminar which was to be held in Rochester, New Hampshire. For weeks and months after, tournament packets and information sheets were prepared and sent or e-mailed all over the country, giving everyone an opportunity to plan ahead for this upcoming event.

A special thanks and recognition to SKIF-USA Headquarters, especially Board of Director, Chris Johnson Sensei, for allowing us to rent and use SKIF-USA Tournament equipment and materials and for the purchase of SKIF-USA medals for our division winners. Thanks also to Lynda Crimmins Sensei, SKIF-USA Administrative Assistant, for posting our event on the SKIF-USA website and for fielding a myriad of questions during the planning stages.

Oct 27th arrives in the greater Portland, Maine area with a weekend weather forecast of heavy rains, strong winds, and lousy travel conditions! However, Shotokan people are a special breed and like the proverbial mailman, who was never hindered with rain, snow, sleet, or hail preventing him from completing his appointed rounds, we had a good showing of 46 dedicated participants of all ages and rank levels and a substantial crowd of supportive family, friends, and instructors traveling both near and afar.

Friday night, Oct 26th, allowed us ample time to prepare the tournament rings and set up tables;... and under the guidance of Jim Shea and Steve Warren Sensei, a very successful judging and referee clinic was conducted for 2 hours with 20 participants from seven different SKIF-USA dojos extending from Maine to New York attending...and offering their sincere assistance on Saturday as judges, referees, and scorekeepers for kata and kumite events throughout the day, thus enabling us to host a successful first time SKIF-USA traditional karate tournament.

Participants for the tournament came from New York, Tennessee, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Maine. Coincidentally, of the varied geographic regions from whence came the various SKIF Dojo participants, a tally of winners from kata, kumite, and team kata gave almost an equal number of wins to each of the participating dojos, from the many varied divisions represented, thus indicating a uniformity of learning and ability and a strong consistency of good karate techniques, indicative of what the SKIF syllabus is all about! Congratulations to all of you that attended this event!

A fabulous and over-abundance of food awaited those of us that attended the "farewell" dinner at the Casa Novella Restaurant in Westbrook Saturday night where both old and new friendships amongst the SKIF Karate Families forged strong ties and high hopes for future events that bring us all together in peace and harmony. The variety of food entrees was never ending and the Italian cuisine and atmosphere was considered numero uno by all that attended! A very special "Thanks" to Michele Farwell Sensei, for selecting such a special place for all of us to enjoy fine dining and an ambiance befitting all that attended.

Events, such as this tournament or seminars, go smoothly because of the never ending energies of those people behind the scenes that make things possible. We have many people to "thank" for their offer of assistance or expertise in the many varied areas that needed to be attended to in order to have this event or any event become successful. Many of you gave up your day or weekend to become part of this 2007 SKIF Regional tournament, and I thank you all for your kind support and generous assistance.

To my tournament business partner, student, and "tomodachi"(friend), Michele Farwell, I want to personally thank you for the many hundreds of hours and personal sacrifice that you willingly gave to make this event become such a reality. Credit should be given to you for the design of the outstanding and varied tournament T-shirts, posters, and brochures, and for the care in preparing food and drink for judges, referees, participants and supporters. Without you, this tournament and opportunity for so many to become part of the SKIF-USA history books would not have occurred.

And to all of you reading this..."More is expected of a Shotokan person, especially SKIF people!"

Oss!



Training For Gradings and Tournaments By James Shea

Participating in gradings and tournaments require proper spirit, self discipline, confidence, a strong level of fitness, a commitment to train regularly, and a desire to test one's skill level. The examiners or judges are not looking to fail anyone, if anything, the karate-ka will find that they are in fact looking for reasons to pass the participant or award him the best score. The participant will be performing a variety of techniques and principles that were covered many times in class or during private trainings. Correct preparation and training time are requisite to success; however, a strong spirit and a correct choice of kata and kumite are equally important.

Gradings and tournaments are not merely demonstrations. Given a choice of kihon ippon and jiyu ippon kumite, we should perform the ones that we can do to the best of our ability instead of choosing the ones that we think will impress the examiners and the judges. This may mean choosing number one from the kihon and jiyu ippon series. A karate-ka should choose a kata that can be performed with precision and accuracy regardless of how advanced it is instead of choosing a more advanced kata with many errors of technique, knowledge, and application. An experienced and knowledgeable judge or examiner assesses a kata performance, solely, on the ability of the participant to perform a clear demonstration of the traditional principles that the kata contains and not on if the participant chooses an advanced flashy kata. The karate-ka should pick a kata that fits his body type and physical abilities.

Lastly, when a karate-ka chooses a kata for an SKIF grading or tournament, demonstrating he understand the SKIF system is also important. An example would be manji uke. The gedan barai arm is to the outside, while the rising arm is on the inside. In Jion, the jodan juji uke stops briefly about chin height. It does not continue as one movement from juji uke to ura zuki – age uke. In Gojushiho Dai, there is a slight lean forward on the final kiai in neko ashi dachi – morote seiryuto uchi; While the final kiai in Gojushiho Sho is done with a straight back in nekoashi dachi – morote gedan ippon nukite. In Gankaku Sho, the jodan morote shuto uke is performed in shiko dachi. There are many similar moves in the katas of shotokan. However, many have slight variations from kata to kata that demonstrate different bunkai. It is imperative to study the katas with great detail to know and to be able to demonstrate the tiny variations in the katas. This ability is a sign of a knowledgeable and advanced SKIF practitioner.

THE GANKAKU-SHO AND NIJU-HACHI-HO KATA OF SKIF By Glenn Stoddard

As discussed in previous issues of this newsletter, the SKIF system developed by Kancho Hirokazu Kanazawa includes all 26 traditional Shotokan-style kata as practiced by the Japan Karate Association (JKA), plus four additional kata: Seienchin, Seipai, Gankaku-Sho, and Niju-Hachi-Ho. This article discusses the Gankaku-Sho and Niju-Hachi-Ho kata as taught by Kancho Kanazawa. In previous articles the meaning and history of the Seienchin and Seipai kata were discussed.

GANKAKU-SHO

The Gankaku-Sho kata is a very traditional Japanese/Okinawan style kata from Tomari-te Shorin-Ryu. Unlike the more commonly seen Gankaku kata of Shotokan (meaning “crane on a rock”), which is performed in a straight line to the front and rear, Gankaku-Sho is performed along a different line of movement (embusen), which is forty-five degrees to the front left and one hundred thirty five degrees to the right rear from the starting or ready position (yoi). This is the only kata taught by Kancho Kanazawa that follows this line of movement. According to Kancho Kanazawa the version of Gankaku-Sho he teaches is the original version of the Gankaku kata (also sometimes called Chinto) from Okinawa. Thus, the more common version of Gankaku seen in Shotokan is really a modified version of the older Gankaku-Sho, which was apparently changed by Master Funakoshi and possibly other sensei.

A nearly identical version of this kata to the one taught by Kancho Kanazawa is illustrated in a book on Okinawan Shorin Ryu karate by the late Master Shoshin Nagamine entitled, *The Essence of Okinawan Karate-Do* (Tuttle Publishing, 1976). In his book, Nagamine Sensei wrote that “Chinto” is “one of the anonymous kata,” meaning no one knows who founded this kata. According to Nagamine Sensei, Chinto is “characterized by dynamic movements using kicking techniques including the flying kick and unitary techniques of offense and defense.” He also wrote that it was a favorite kata of the famous Okinawan karate masters “Kyan and Arakaki.”

Kancho Kanazawa has discussed this kata in several published interviews over the years and he has taught it to SKIF members at seminars all over the world. One of the main reasons Kancho Kanazawa teaches Gankaku-Sho and has added it to the SKIF system is that his version of the kata includes ten different stances, including musubi dachi; zenkutsu dachi;

kiba dachi; kokutsu dachi; fudo dachi; kosa dachi (cross legged stance); shiko dachi; iagosi dachi (kneeling stance); bent leg renoji dachi (L stance); and soto hachiji dachi (open V stance). In addition, this kata includes numerous body rotations to change directions, many unique defenses and counter-attacks to different targets, levels and directions, open hand techniques, and several defensive distraction techniques with the hands.

The Gankaku-Sho kata is listed and recognized for competition by higher level competitors in certain divisions in SKIF tournaments. In 1994, Kancho Kanazawa and SKIF Yudansha Kai produced a video showing Kancho Kanazawa performing Gankaku-Sho, as well as the Seienchin and Sepai kata. This video has since been made into a DVD by SKIF Yudansha Kai. It shows Kancho Kanazawa performing these three kata at various speeds and at different angles. In addition, it shows Kancho Kanazawa demonstrating detailed applications (bunkai) for each movement of these three kata. Copies of this DVD should be available through SKIF Yudansha Kai at www.skif-yudansha-kai.com.

NIJU-HACHI-HO

The Niju-Hachi-Ho kata is of Okinawan origin and, originally, from White Crane gung fu (Chinese wushu). The name Niju-Hachi-Ho means "28 steps" in Japanese. The version of this kata taught by Kancho Kanazawa is slightly different than the version commonly practiced by Shito-Ryu karateka, which is generally known as "Nipaipo."

The Niju-Hachi-Ho kata is considered a very advanced kata in SKIF and has only been widely taught by Kancho Kanazawa to SKIF members during the last ten years or so. During that time, however, Kancho has taught the kata to many people throughout the world and it is becoming quite popular among advanced SKIF members.

Like Gankaku-Sho, Niju-Hachi-Ho contains many different stances, numerous body rotations to change directions, many unique defenses and counter-attacks to different targets, levels and directions, and numerous open hand techniques. It also contains mawashi-uke (circular block), which is only found in two other commonly practiced Shotokan kata: Unsu and Nijushiho.

In Niju-Hachi-Ho there are a number of techniques which can be quite dangerous if used in self defense or in bunkai practice. Like Seienchin, Seipai, and Gankaku-Sho, Niju-Hachi-Ho also uses the shiko dachi (square stance), which is not used in the other more common Shotokan kata.

The Niju-Hachi-Ho kata is listed and recognized for competition by high level competitors in certain divisions in SKIF tournaments, and it is becoming popular

with many senior members of SKIF. In 2005, Kancho Kanazawa and Rising Sun productions produced a DVD series called *Mastering Karate*, which includes DVDs showing Kancho Kanazawa and Senseis Manabu Murakami, Nobuaki Kanazawa and Paul Walker teaching and performing many SKIF kata, as well as kihon and kumite. The *Mastering Karate* DVD series includes a performance of Niju-Hachi-Ho by Kancho Kanazawa, along with his explanation of the kata. Copies of the *Mastering Karate* DVD series, including Niju-Hachi-Ho are available from SKIF-USA at www.skifusa.com.

South East SKIF Tournament

By Jimmy Wong

More than 100 SKIF members from the South East USA and the Bahamas participated in the South East SKIF Tournament held October 27, 2007 in Miami, Florida. Participants were great and showed the true spirit of cooperation and competition of karate. We, the members of SKIF-Miami are very thankful to all the SKIF members that came as our guests. They made our tournament very successful with their skills and goodwill. Events like this show us that as SKIF members we have friends in many places.



The Benefits of Keeping a Training Diary

By Paul Walker

author of *Lessons with the Master*

Most Shotokan practitioners would probably agree that one of the hardest things to do in karate is to get to class consistently and to train regularly. Despite all of the trials and tribulations of learning the mechanics and execution of basic techniques, despite the mental and physical challenges of kata practice, and despite the rigours of kumite training, getting to class seems to be one of the primary obstacles to success and consistent growth in our karate training. This obstacle is confirmed by the many masters of our art who say again and again that the only secret to karate is “to keep training”.

With this being said, many readers of this article will probably also have a negative reaction to my case for keeping a training diary or a karate journal as an important and necessary method for improving your overall ability, knowledge and understanding of your chosen art. But please give the idea a chance and hopefully you will see the full benefits of such an undertaking.

Let's look first of all at why writing a training diary might be something of value to any martial arts practitioner. A diary is an invaluable memory aid that will help you to keep a tangible record of your training experiences that you can look back through at any time and know that what you see in your journal is what you actually did in class. Sometimes the amount of new information that we learn can be overwhelming and in order to organize this weekly information into a meaningful structure that makes sense to you it is necessary to take notes. Students at colleges and universities take lecture notes; business leaders take seminar notes; why shouldn't karate students take lesson notes? Our art is deep by nature and the more you learn, it sometimes seems like the less you know, but through consistent and committed practice inside the dojo, and integration of the concepts that are taught by means of notes and a journal, you can organize information in a way that makes sense to you. Integrating concepts means obtaining a fundamental knowledge of how each concept relates to other concepts. Without this understanding, each concept exists alone as a sole jigsaw piece; if you are able to see the wider picture, the pieces of each evening's lesson should mesh together nicely, expediting your move to the next level of training. Through your efforts in writing a diary you are able to live each lesson a minimum of two times, once physically and once mentally. If you reread your notes periodically you can actually live each lesson many

more times and will often gain deeper insight into what you learned previously due to your increased experience.

So now that I have described the reasons for writing a training diary or karate journal let's now look at the task of how to write a training diary.

Well the good news is that you don't need much in the way of equipment, a pen and a piece of paper or notebook (either paper version or laptop version) will suffice. Next you don't need to devote too much time per day to your journal writing (usually 20 – 30 minutes is enough to write down what you did and what you learned during the lesson). But here is where most note-takers or journal writers fail – you **MUST** be consistent and you **MUST** write an entry for every lesson that you attend (or that you teach) for you to truly gain value from your efforts! When compared to your training, instant gratification from one diary entry is but a fleeting glimpse into the world of future possibilities that are not yet achieved realities. To make those glimpses of insight windows of learning you **MUST** be consistent. You will have those days when you think you have solved all of the mysteries of your art and your place within the art, and then come the days when you realize how little you know, how much you still need to learn and how hard your chosen pursuit, hobby, or career path really is. It is in these times that you will want to turn to your diary to RE-appreciate your journey up to this point and to see how your future path will not always be rosy but will ultimately still lead you to your goals.

OK, back to your training diary. If you are a student or instructor, no matter what level, the basic entries for your journal should include the following:

Date

Name of the instructor (only if the class instructor changes regularly, if not then maybe title your diary *Lessons with Sensei [Instructor's Name]*),

Content of the class (this can be broken down into the classic kihon, kata and kumite segments, or could be organized chronologically according to the flow of the class, or could include warm-up drills, conditioning drills, essential drills, creative drills, etc. Basically this content structure should match both your sensei's lesson content and flow and your own way of assimilating information),

Important points of the lesson (i.e. sensei's explanations, key ideas and concepts, historical notes, cultural notes, language and terminology, rank-specific information, etc.),

Personal Notes (i.e., need to work on my execution of knife-hand block, need to improve on my rhythm in Heian Godan, need to focus on my weight distribution in kokutsu-dachi, need to make sure my punches are on target all of the time instead of just some of the time, etc.)

Once you have done all of the above you have the basis of a training diary. So now all you have to do is to get

started! Sounds easy, doesn't it? Unfortunately it isn't, because just in the same way that getting to class consistently is sometimes an obstacle, writing a diary will prove to be a bigger obstacle because it is one more thing on your weekly to-do list. I personally wrote a training diary for three solid years including 279 lessons during my time in Japan training at Master Hirokazu Kanazawa's Honbu-dojo in Tokyo. I will be completely honest and say that it was a difficult thing to do but the way that I got around my tendency to procrastinate on my karate journal was to make the actual diary notes a part of the lesson. I made a decision that writing my notes when I got home from class was non-negotiable and that the physical training and my mental review were not mutually exclusive; they were in fact one and the same!

In hindsight my efforts with my karate journal have turned out to be one of the most productive and valuable parts of my 25 plus years of training because the process of writing down what I did in each class I attended, what I needed to work on, my observations and understanding of key ideas and concepts and all of my other notes have made sure that I won't ever forget what I learned. I may not still get everything that I learned right and I know there will be many more obstacles ahead in my training but I am confident that I have given myself the best chance to be successful in my personal quest to reach my full potential in my training.

In conclusion, a karate diary or journal serves primarily as a blow-by-blow account of your training. It includes what you studied, what you learned, what you need to work on and other personal insights and observations that you gained from your lessons. It should be done consistently in order to gain the greatest benefit and it should be reread many times over at different stages of your study to keep track of your progress. Finally what you will realize after some time is that your diary notes are not only an invaluable training aid to you personally but that they are also valuable to other practitioners. You could share them with your friends and training partners in your dojo, with your instructor, or as many people have done, with fellow practitioners by means of articles in SKM. I have read many such reports on seminars and have often found them to be very useful and informative.

So I challenge everyone to write a journal and to assimilate all of the teachings of the great masters and instructors out there into something that makes sense not just to you but also to others. You have nothing to lose and potentially everything to gain. Happy training – and happy writing!

www.seishinshotokan.com

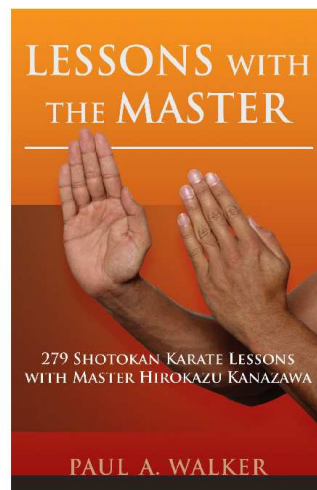
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Lessons with the Master

279 Shotokan Karate Lessons with Master Hirokazu Kanazawa

Author: Paul Walker



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Welcome to Sensei Mowry

Sensei Carman Mowry of Tradition Shotokan Karate, located in Biloxi, MS, joined the SKIF-USA family in 2006. Her dojo is composed of mainly children but is growing to include the parents of some of her students. WELCOME!



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

See all of the SKIF-USA merchandise catalogue online at: www.skifusa.com



Thank goodness for control!

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