

SHOSHIN 正心流 RYU

WHAT'S IN
A COLOR?

Kokoro Guided Imagery
The Burden of Fear
Visiting Japan
Muto Ryu
COVID-19 Martial Perspective

ISSUE #98
FALL 2020



SHOSHIN RYU
— MARTIAL ARTS —





SUBMISSIONS

Michael Scisco
michael@riograndeshoshinryu.com

REGISTRAR

Jesse Bair
bair@shoshinryu.org

SHOSHIN RYU BOARD MEMBERS

SMS: Brian Combo - combo@shoshinryu.org or sms@shoshinryu.org
Jesse Bair - bair@shoshinryu.org
Stephen Coniaris - coniaris@shoshinryu.org
Westen Curry - curry@shoshinryu.org
Aaron Lawrence - lawrence@shoshinryu.org
Shane Stetz - stetz@shoshinryu.org

SUBMISSIONS

Please send us your original articles (short or long), stories, poems, letters, drawings, comics, favorite quotes, suggestions, or photos.

Articles should be proofread for spelling and grammar. Submissions should be sent via email if possible. Please send all written material in Microsoft Word format or simple text file.

EDITORIAL POLICY

- Positive (do not degrade any art or group).
- Sincere efforts to educate, entertain or inspire the reader (no self aggrandizement or commercial pitches please).
- Material should be generally understood even by persons who know very little about the subject; yet hold enough substance that a yudansha would learn from it.
- Editor reserves the right to refuse to publish any material deemed inappropriate.

The little bowing symbol will be used at the end of each article to remind the reader of the writer's thanks for taking their time to consider the ideas presented. It is also to remind us to thank the writer for taking the time to consider the ideas presented and to share their thoughts with us.



ANNUAL DUES

Mudansha (Kyu): \$60
Yudansha (Dan): \$140
Family Rates: 50% off for 3rd (or 4th etc.) person in household.
Lifetime Membership: \$3,000

MUDANSHA MEMBERS SHALL RECEIVE

Patch (1st membership only)
Quarterly journal
No charge for testing or new belts
Certificates of rank

YUDANSHA MEMBERS SHALL RECEIVE

Quarterly journal
Embroidered Black Belt (1st only)
Dan certificate (in kanji)
No charge for testing
Nidan and up / Dojo Cho: complimentary access to all video curriculum up to the material they need for testing

TESTING

Kyu shall be tested by their Sensei, not more than two times per year.

Shodan (with a minimum of 3.5 years time in grade), may be eligible to be tested by their Sensei and Senior Most Student or Board Member as appointed by Senior Most Student.

Nidan & up testing will be given one day before the National Seminar. Nidan candidates must have a minimum 7.5 years experience in the art.

www.shoshinryu.org

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ON THE COVER

Photo: Training at Permanent Dojo
Kanji: Shoshin Ryu - Truthful Heart Tradition

JOURNAL EDITORIAL STAFF

Shane Stetz
Editor

Stephen Coniaris
Editor

Michael Scisco
Layout Editor

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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

Brian Combo | SMS | Minneapolis, MN

ALL THINGS DOJO RE-OPENING

Our collective Dojo closed in early spring in conjunction with the stay at home mandates throughout the country attributed to all things COVID-19. Most of our Shoshin Dojo started reopening in late May and June with a few making the transition back to in person training late summer. Some of our schools have recently advocated for outdoor training options and/or in addition to maintaining local Zoom classes. A myriad of social distancing and disinfecting/cleaning practices have been implemented throughout our collective Dojo with in-person training, maintaining compliance with federal, state and local health and safety guidelines. It is imperative that an art/organization that focuses on self-defense adheres to keeping students' training as safe as possible during this pandemic.

As tragic, challenging and disruptive as the pandemic has been, it has been wonderful to see and hear about so many of our members making the best of a bad situation by finding the positivity amidst all the negativity - increasing solo training and thus elevating and refining their movement; embracing spending additional quality time with family; carving out more time for exercise, including taking advantage of all things walking, running, hiking and enjoying the great outdoors; and offering various means of financial and personal support to those hit particularly hard by this outbreak;

Continuing to find the positivity amidst all the negativity and thus, making something good out of a bad situation, Shoshin offered....

2020 Virtual Nationals on Zoom

Over 50 students participated in our first ever Virtual Nationals in July, notably named "The Living

Room Tour" by our t-shirt designers/facilitators of Sensei Lawrence, Robert Freitas and Steffen Kuronen. We had classes/training on Friday and again on Sunday with a more extensive training day sandwiched in the middle on Saturday.

There was a plethora of solo training classes and martial material offered to participants. Highlighting some of those classes they ranged from: taking your kicking skills to the ground; to a variety of ground based solo drills utilizing various props to assist in the learning; transitioning kihon drills from "block letters" (stopping points) to "cursive writing" (flowing from one to the next without stopping); stick/knife drilling with a variety of movement and footwork; variety of bunkai and jujutsu options given to the technical standup drill typically looked at as just getting back up off the ground efficiently; throwing with an empty gi and belt while moving in/out of various kazushi set-ups; cross lateral drills were both fun and complexing to train (think: pat the top of your head with your left hand while circling your abdomen with the right hand); and of course several Kata/kihon refinements throughout the various ranks and material.

In addition to continued solo options, Saturday's sessions also offered Duo or 2 person training options throughout the day for those students who were able to safely secure an uke, family member, or close friend as a training partner. Students were able to build on moving in/out of entry points into various waza including wrists locks, throws and striking patterns. There was even 2 person newaza training options for refining and looking at a variety of pins and positions as well as other self-defense based material.

Cabin 8 social rooms came to life Saturday afternoon/evening (depending upon one's U.S. state of residence). Sensei Coniaris' room addressed

students' questions on all things historical perspective within Shoshin's history and martial arts in general. The second Cabin 8 room was all about connecting with one another, sharing stories, laughs, and the occasional toast or cheers to one another. Fun, fun, fun!!

Huge thanks to all who chose to be a part of Zoom Nationals. Thank you for investing in yourself; for being a part of making the best out of a difficult situation; and for all your sincere training efforts, all the smiles and all the dedication. Special thanks as well to our Nationals Chairpersons Eric and Sean as well as our dedicated Board who conducted the bulk of the teaching and who regularly work tirelessly behind the scenes for the greater good of Shoshin.

Students do take their training seriously, but also take the opportunity to find the humor in life and in training. The best written training quote of the weekend was submitted by Caroline Scudder of Hawaii in referencing her notes/experience during Sensei Peterson's inverted solo ground drills using walls and props: "Lost a fight today... with a chair!"

At the end of Zoom Nationals on Sunday and running through final thoughts with everyone, I announced that next year's event is scheduled to be an "in person" experience in Boise, Idaho. Hopefully with science continuing to evolve with all things COVID-19 and as more is learned about the intricacies of this disease, people everywhere can move beyond the collective fallout from this pandemic and return to some semblance of normalcy.

Lastly, I informed the Nationals' participants my intentions of...

Stepping Down as SMS Effective Next Summer

Having been given the honor of a lifetime to serve this organization since our inception in 1993, the time has come for me to step down from my role as Senior Most Student. I will certainly take more time between now and next summer to express my gratitude throughout all these years to this Organization, to all the collective Board members who have served, and to all our Membership for making Shoshin such a positive and unique martial art that it is today.

This transition of change from one SMS to another is a natural process built into the very fabric/bylaws of our organization. The SMS steps down passing the baton to the next SMS while still being capable, strong and in good health. This helps insure

that the transition is smooth and that the new SMS has plenty of guidance and support going forward.

It is my pleasure and honor to announce...

Sensei Jesse Bair, the Next SMS

I have had the pleasure of watching the growth of Sensei Bair since early on in Shoshin's history. He has carved out many roles in Shoshin throughout the years: from earning his Shoshin Black Belt; to starting the Boise Dojo, growing/moving the venue from a racquetball court and then to a gymnasium and finally to full-time Dojo; accepting a position on our Executive Board; carving out a niche as membership/Dojo chair, revamping how we set our Board agenda, and so much more. I became cognizant early in our history of his many notable qualities of: leadership, sincerity, passion, humor, dedication, determination, and certainly, martial skillset. Sensei Bair has continued year in, year out to elevate both his teaching craft as well as his martial depth and command. He was one of the first individuals whom I looked at as a potential SMS candidate many years ago. I recognized that he possessed the qualities I knew would serve him and the overall organization well. If someone were to ask me if Sensei Bair was a better leader, practitioner, or teacher, my answer would be, YES!!!

How will the change to a new SMS affect most of you? - very little actually. I will admit, however, that while you will get a younger, funnier, better looking, less hair challenged leader (Lol), Sensei Bair will continue to carry forward the fine traditions and standards of Shoshin with the support and continued guidance of the Executive Board. I will remain on the Board for a 1-5 year period, helping to further mentor Sensei Bair and to ensure there is a smooth transition. He has 100% support from the Board and myself and the Board and I will help guide and mentor him as needed; but make no mistake, he will be himself, not me! And that is how it should be. He will not walk in my footsteps; rather, he will seek what I/SR sought.

Because Sensei Bair will be moving into the role as the new SMS and so as not to create any semblance of conflict of interest...

Sensei Chris Peterson Will Be Stepping off the Board

Sensei Peterson will be stepping off the Board later this winter. He did not want to open the possibility for any potential conflict of interest with him being a Board member and with Sensei Bair coming in as the new SMS all the while functioning together in



the same dojo. Thus, he is stepping away from his Board role for very honorable reasons. Mr. Peterson will remain an integral part of the Boise Dojo while continuing to maintain a national presence within the greater Shoshin community.

Sensei Peterson was Sensei Bair's first Black Belt and together in partnership both have helped to shape and grow the Boise Dojo, both in terms of quality and in numbers of students/members. I first met Mr. Peterson as an aspiring Yellow Belt at a local park in Idaho Falls back in the 1990's. To literally watch someone evolve from the very ground floor martially within Shoshin, to where his skill, understanding and quality of motion are today, well, all I can really say is it is truly rewarding and humbling at the same time to see that growth/progress.

Sensei Peterson has been a huge contributor to the greater Shoshin organization for many years accepting the invitation years ago to serve on our Executive Board. He has served for several years now in the capacity as one of our Journal Editors helping to grow the quality of this quarterly for all things art/organization/membership. Many of his pictorials and

videos can be found within or via links to the journal. He recently championed Shoshin's adoption of the Safe Sport Act Policy (SSA;) a nationally recognized program/institution that educates and advocates for the protection of minors nationwide from potential predatory practices/acts of ill-intentioned adults who serve in supervisory roles. Sensei Peterson has also played a continuing role in elevating all levels of our curriculum, in particular, all things newaza, all things ground based waza, strategy and application. He has contributed and helped in many other areas within Shoshin, over his years on the Board. In short, we are ALL better, more well informed, better trained martial artists because of the efforts of Sensei Peterson.

While all of us on the Executive Board will miss Mr. Peterson's presence, contributions and unique insights, we are happy that he will continue to help and shape the Boise Dojo as well as the greater Shoshin art/community with his work/efforts in all things curriculum. From all of us in Shoshin - a huge THANK YOU, Sensei Chris!!!!



ALL THINGS ARE DIFFICULT BEFORE THEY ARE EASY

Find peace and strength through balance



With great appreciation,
the entire Shoshin Ryu
community would like to
thank Sensei Peterson for
his service, insight and
contributions to the Shoshin
Ryu Board and Journal Staff.

THANK YOU!



WHAT'S IN A COLOR?

RANKING SYSTEM IN SHOSHIN RYU & OTHER MARTIAL ARTS

SHANE STETZ | YUDANSHA | IDAHO FALLS, ID

One of the most frequent questions I get asked by people who want to learn about martial arts is “How long will it take to get a black belt?”. Perhaps it is because of how martial arts are portrayed in movies, references in pop culture, or perception of success, but having a black belt seems to mean a lot for beginners. For those that enter a dojo and begin to train, they quickly realize that there are many lessons to learn and earning a black belt is a journey that will ultimately take a considerable amount of time and dedication. Through that journey several belt ranks are awarded, but what exactly do these ranks represent and where did they come from?

Practicing martial arts can be a rewarding experience and the perseverance, dedication, and commitment is recognized in a belt rank that the student wears to honor their achievement. Most martial arts systems have some means to distinguish rank between their practitioners. Perhaps you have heard the story of how traditionally everyone used to wear a white belt? After years of practice, sweat would eventually turn the belt a black color. The darker the belt meant the student had spent more time training and thus had a potentially higher level of skill. Though there certainly may be some truth in this hypothesis, credit for introducing a modern ranking system in martial arts is often given to Jigoro Kano, the founder of Judo. Kano is said to have gotten the idea of having a ranking system from a chess-like game called Go (Igo in Japanese). Go is the oldest continuously played game in the world and the earliest reference to the game is from the fourth century B.C. It is exceedingly popular in East Asia and players are ranked according to their skill levels: beginner, casual, intermediate, advanced, and professional. Advanced and professional players were considered “dan” and all other players were considered “kyu”. Kano used a similar system to split the skill level of his students by organizing them into two ranks: mudansha (unranked) and yudansha (ranked). Those terms will be familiar

to our practitioners because Shoshin Ryu follows Kano’s traditional model where a new student initially dons a white belt followed by various solid colors until a black belt is obtained. Students who are working towards black belt are called “kyu” (or more formally “mudansha”) and students who have achieved black belt are considered “dan” (or more formally yudansha).

Belt ranks can mean many different things depending on the martial art system, but typically the ranking is used to recognize knowledge of curriculum or to mark the progress a student has made. When Shoshin Ryu was first determining their ranking system, several options were discussed; including having no belt ranks at all or progression without many colors where the student would go from white to brown to black. The founding board members of Shoshin Ryu thought that having fewer belts ranks would eliminate the potential for members to fight over status. Based on experience, they had seen other martial groups get caught up in what color or rank they had achieved instead of focusing on training and getting better. Shoshin Ryu wanted a system that was simple and something that would be inspirational. They wanted rank to be used as encouragement that one was improving in skill and quality of motion over time.

The official mudansha belt ranks in the Shoshin Ryu adult curriculum are shown on the next page. The colors go in the following order: white, yellow, blue, green, brown, and finally black. The youth program belt ranking system in Shoshin Ryu is slightly different because it adds colors such as orange (after yellow) and purple (after blue). There are stripes for belt ranks as well to encourage younger minds on a regular basis. The additional colors and stripes are used by sensei in the youth programs to provide a link between the adult and youth curriculums. The adult’s curriculum covers a broad range of skills and techniques that are best taught in smaller segments to younger students. This helps younger students progress and understand the



principles being taught and are used to facilitate the transition to the adult class when they reach a certain age or maturity level. That does not necessarily mean that the youth are behind the adults in their martial arts training though. For example, younger students are typically more agile and therefore they practice techniques such as shiko walk, buck and roll escape, and o-goshi sooner than their adult counterparts.

colors that extend beyond black and sometimes there is no standardization between belts ranks within the same organization. Take the International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation: a black belt with a white bar generally indicates a competitor, however it can mean the student is a practitioner and they have no competitive experience at all. A black belt with a red bar is the standard black belt awarded in most BJJ

SHOSHIN RYU BELT RANK SYSTEM

MUDANSHA



YUDANSHA



Sensei use colors of belts to reward students, but belt colors also add organization to the flow of the class. Sensei can group individuals with similar progress and skill together to work techniques that will improve their performance. Rank has even been used by other martial art systems to document how many classes a student has attended or to show how much experience they have from participating in seminars, private lessons, or tournaments.

Within Shoshin Ryu there are different levels or “degrees” of black belt, but the color or style of the belt remains the same once shodan (or first-degree black belt) is achieved. It is interesting to note that some martial arts systems have belt

schools, but the red bar can also be used to help designate someone who is a coach or designate someone who is the senior instructor. A black belt with a red bar and white borders can indicate the student has a certain number of years teaching, or it can be used to differentiate them from the head instructor. Interestingly, in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu the top belt color is not black, but rather a solid red belt. This belt color is preceded by a red and white belt and a belt with alternating colors of red and black (similar to Judo).

Other organizations have belt colors that may seem strange to Shoshin Ryu members. Capoeira has a blue and red striped belt that is used by mid-level students. Other arts such as Shuai

Chiao Kung Fu have ranks beyond black such as solid yellow, yellow/red striped, and yellow/red/blue/white striped. A Wing Chung beginner student starts by wearing a black belt with a green stripe and progresses towards the top rank of yellow! The French boxing art of Savate uses blue gloves to designate a beginner student’s rank and progresses through glove colors such as green, red, white, yellow, silver, and gold. Ranking may seem very confusing in the martial arts, especially if you travel from one dojo or train with one organization to the next. There is no standard for what belt ranking system needs to be employed, however, almost all martial arts systems start at white belt and progress from there. This method seems to work well within each organization, and it gives schools the flexibility to designate individual’s progress as they see fit. Please note there is no correlation between one art’s black belt and another’s. Thus one new black belt might typically have 8 months training and another 6 years - as you may guess, the two students likely have very different skill levels.

In Shoshin Ryu, classes emphasize the kohai-sempai (junior-senior system), in which all students have the responsibility to help guide the understanding, training, and development of those junior to them. In turn, all students have the responsibility to respect the teachings of those senior to them. A core curriculum has been formulated and is intended to teach mudansha

the fundamental skills that Shoshin Ryu values and to develop a certain level of competency with these skills. These skills are taught through the repetition of specific techniques and motions. Priorities of the primary curriculum are to provide effective responses and to cover all the core self-defense technique ideas and concepts. As a student advances, he/she becomes able to freely and spontaneously substitute any response for any attack.

Ultimately, members of Shoshin Ryu often find themselves training for the love of the Art, and not for a specific rank or title. Rank in Shoshin Ryu is a milepost along the endless highway of training and each progression provides a goal to keep the practitioner working to the next level. Even the figurehead of the organization, the Senior Most Student, has a title that is not “Soke”, “Shihan”, “Master” or any impressive name. His name was chosen with an emphasis on humility and support. The name Senior Most Student gives both the feeling of leader and the reminder that one is always a student, always learning and always emptying one’s cup. If one passes their belt test, they train and strive to get better. If one does not pass their belt test, they train and strive to get better. Remember, it is the individual that makes the belt, and not the belt that makes the individual.

Domo Arigato Gozaimashita.



KOKORO GUIDED IMAGERY

New Curriculum Training Tool

Shoshin Ryu is proud to add another training tool to improve the SR Practitioner. As you know – Kokoro (heart) is a big part of Shoshin Ryu. To help with the student's understanding of Kokoro and to implement the essence of Kokoro into practice, SR has produced Guided Imagery recordings to accompany each rank. These were produced in conjunction with Lisa Smole, a professional therapist and long time SR Yudansha, who for many years has been helping people with guided imagery. We greatly appreciate her dedicating the time, energy, and expertise to create something very special for our practitioners.

These have been added to your Curriculum videos free of charge. We would ask you start at the White to Yellow belt audio and work your way up. Here is free access to the White to Yellow Kokoro Guided Imagery audio tape:

<https://shoshinryu.org/media/gi/wy.mp3>

All ranks will benefit from this tape. Currently we have posted through Green to Brown. The Brown Belt audios will be available by end of the year. Yudansha Guided Imagery will follow. To get the maximum benefits – start at the beginning.

Guided Imagery is an adjunctive technique to add to your personal training. It is a form of visualization that will enhance your skills by giving you a better understanding of the principles offered in the Kokoro Series and a more positive, can-do self image from which to put those principles into practice. In terms of your training, guided imagery can assist you in moving faster, smoother, and sharper by giving you better ways to learn while minimizing practices that slow you down or inhibit high-quality motion. Simply put, it will help you get better by improving your mind/body relationship. Many researches studies have been done to show it is safe and effective. It is used by most of the top Olympic and professional sports athletes.

The recordings are about 15-20 minutes in length. For best results use them 20 times over the course of a month. Some people enjoy using them as a break during the day, but most find it helpful prior to bed. The relaxation that accompanies the imagery is very helpful for getting to sleep and enjoying a deep, restful sleep.

Please be sure to read the handout accompanying the recordings on when NOT to use them. When operating heavy machinery, driving, or anywhere distractions can be deleterious or harmful.

Enjoy the latest SR Practitioner tool – put it to good use. Enjoy getting better.





SELF DEFENSE

Rear Overarm Bear Hug



1 Uke grabs tori over both arms from behind



2 Tori rakes shin then stomps uke's right foot while driving his knuckles into uke's metacarpals



3 Tori steps out to same side he stomped on, then rolls his left hip forward to bring his left hand out



4 Tori rotates his left hip back to drive his left elbow into uke's solar plexus



5 Tori then drops his left hand to strike the groin while keeping uke's right hand trapped



6 Tori continues to rotate to the left swinging his right hand into uke's face and extending the head back



7 Tori continues to rotate to the left moving into kokutsu dachi as he does middle inside block as a strike



8 Tori continues to rotate his hips to the left driving right elbow to uke's liver (floating ribs)



9 Tori grabs onto uke's arm and executes osoto gari



10 Tori keeps upward pressure on uke's arm so uke ends up on his side with Uke's "weapons" facing away



11 Tori executes a heel stomp to uke's ribs



12 Tori steps over uke dropping or placing knee on head and getting an arm bar



The Wise Man

The wise man tells you
Where you have fallen
And where you may yet fall –
Invaluable.
Follow his words and actions.

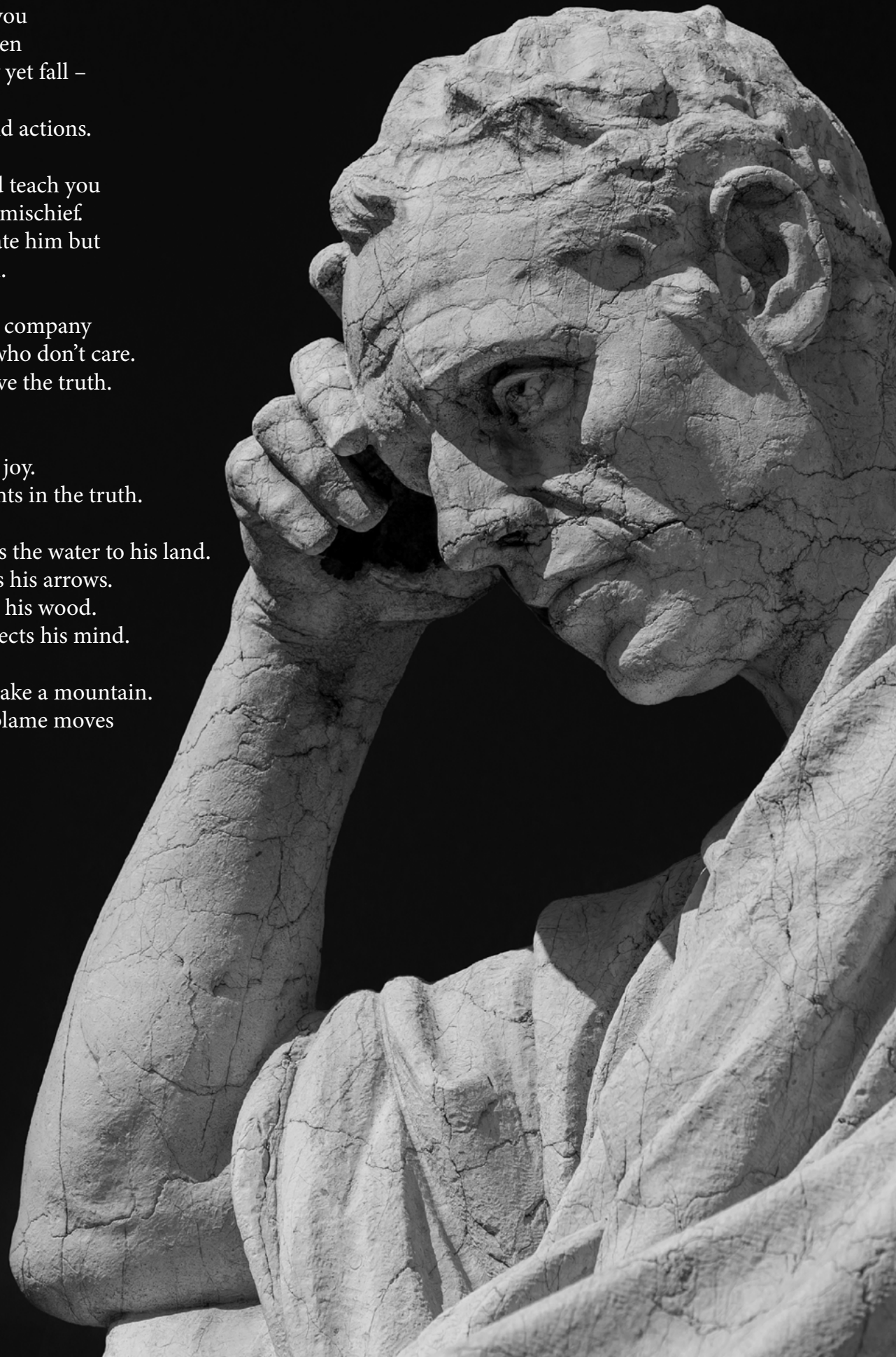
Let him chasten and teach you
And keep you from mischief
The popular may hate him but
Good men love him.

Do not look for bad company
Or hang with men who don't care.
Find friends who love the truth.

Live deeply.
Live in serenity and joy.
The wise man delights in the truth.

The farmer channels the water to his land.
The fletcher whittles his arrows.
The carpenter turns his wood.
So the wise man directs his mind.

The wind cannot shake a mountain.
Neither praise nor blame moves
the wise man.



A POWERFUL PERSON

By Sensei Calvin Koshiyama

Powerful

A powerful person is not just one of competent physical ability.
That ability must be accompanied by;
strength of character, clearness of mind, and fullness of heart.
This makes a person a powerful being. What they see as a whole, how they live their life.

Strength of Character

To humble yourself to be able to appreciate and empathize with others,
To respect at all times in all ways to receive respect from others,
To place others before yourself to understand the responsibilities when they place themselves
in your care.

Clearness of Mind

To be able to see all, not just what we think is important or want to see.
Both strengths and weaknesses,
To understand what we see,
To accept what we do not understand or cannot change,
To see ourselves as clearly as we see others,
To find and adhere to the paths to better ourselves.

Fullness of Heart

To be able to clearly see and yet accept those around us,
To be able to forgive when hurt,
To be able to continue to hope,
To be able to love in spite of the faults or
failings or the disappointments,
To accept ourselves for all the faults and
failings and disappointments.



Fear can be a debilitating emotion if it is not understood and managed. Some are paralyzed by it; fear of flying, fear of snakes, fear of the dark. Most fears have an element of rationality. Planes do crash, some snakes are poisonous, there are various dangers that come with darkness. However, fears can be managed, and in some cases, turned into strengths. Nelson Mandela said “Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

I have seriously feared for my life a few times. Poor decisions while flying, backpacking in the high country, incidents in the open ocean, etc. But most of my fears have been of the inconsequential, but nonetheless extremely debilitating sort. Fear of walking into the doctor’s office to get a medical diagnosis. Fear of opening the email with serious criticism of a submitted journal paper. Fear of looking at the house foundation to see if there is a crack. Fear of answering the phone, knowing it’s a neighbor angered by a boundary dispute. Fear of reading the editorial section of the paper the day after a controversial decision as president of the school board. Fear of doing a kata in front of a group of seasoned, well-disciplined and highly skilled yudansha, knowing that I haven’t adequately prepared. In all but the last, the outcome is already cast. The diagnosis, the editorial, the critical email- these have already been made or written. And for the last one, there is nothing to be done other than to just get out there and do what I can and let the chips fall where they may. But it doesn’t matter. The adrenaline and the cortisol are already flowing, even if it turns out that the diagnosis turns out to be negative, the editorial and paper review turn out to be positive, the neighbor is calling to apologize, and the kata turns out fine- my fellow yudansha are a band of brothers and sisters that are just happy to see a fellow student give it his best.

Louis Pasteur said that “Chance favors the prepared mind.” He was observing that many people appear to be “lucky” or always getting “good breaks,” but often times, it is one’s preparation for the unknown that increases the odds of a favorable outcome. Being prepared is the most effective method of overcoming fear and being successful. Faithfully practicing the five fingers of the art of Shoshin Ryu prepares us for both physical and mental confrontation. Preparing for the future through education, budgeting, avoidance of debt, and being generous with our time and resources can reduce the fear of future economic uncertainty. Clearly, being

prepared will not prevent all misfortune, but it will enable us to meet difficulties with the most appropriate response, resulting highest probability of success.

Recently I had a first-hand encounter with an opportunity to recognize, face, and manage fear. I was flying a high performance, high wing, bush plane across the mountains from Washington State to my home in Kansas. These planes have very low stall speeds, large tires, and a tail wheel which puts the center of gravity behind the pilot, making them potentially unstable on landing and roll out, compared to their nose-wheel counterparts. They are particularly difficult to handle in strong cross-winds. Everything went well until we entered Nebraska and the winds were much higher than forecast; surface winds of 30-40 mph with strong gusts while at altitude they were 60 mph with wind shear. It was like riding a bucking roller coaster on the approach to landing. Turning base to final, with the runway appearing and disappearing from the windscreen, when fear started to emerge from its subconscious hiding place, suddenly a thought came to the front of my mind that said “I’ve got this.” My hands relaxed on the stick and throttle, I settled back in the seat and just put the plane onto the ground with both the rudder and elevator going stop to stop to keep the nose (mostly) aligned with the runway. While fortunate, the successful outcome was not an accident. With thousands of landings and hundreds of hours flying I was generally prepared, but it took a specific event to demonstrate the ability to deliver. Clearly, the outcome could have been much different and potentially catastrophic. However, even in that case, successfully managing the fear would have drastically improved my odds.

This is just one example of how preparation and practice can enable us to conquer fear and build courage. Fear can be a soul-destroying emotion. Untreated, it is unhealthy and unworthy. It is often irrational. But it doesn’t have to control me. In the end, just open the damn email. Answer the phone. Open the door and confront what is on the other side. Addressing the unknown with confidence and resolve is a characteristic of the mature and prepared mind.

I appreciate the teaching of Yamaoku Tesshu that instructs us in these concepts.

“This does not mean simply conquering the fear of a fight. Many people can do that, but are overwhelmed when confronted with the passions of greed, anger, lust or the delusion of fame, wealth or responsibility. You must master fearlessness of both inner and outer fears”

I haven’t perfectly internalized this yet. But I’m working on it, and I haven’t given up. And I don’t intend to.



COVID-19: a martial perspective

By: Dr. Stephen Coniaris | Yudansha | Scottsdale, AZ

Shoshin Ryu strongly emphasizes Goshinjutsu (self-defense) and Kokoro (personal growth) in our martial trainings. In the self-defense aspect it is more than defending against bullies, predators and attackers. It means self-defense against all things that might harm you. This includes bullies and predators but also such things as:

- Wearing a helmet when biking – protect you head/brain from falls.
- Wearing a seatbelt when driving – protect you against injury if you should be in a crash.
- Exercising regularly – to prevent coronary disease and early death.
- Getting regular screening test as recommended – for example colonoscopy at age 45 to catch early colon cancer while it is treatable.

All of these precautions and more, are part of self-defense – defending yourself against things that can harm you. It should be no surprise that we can use our skills to help defend ourself against one of the deadliest killers in the US – COVID-19. The disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. Just as we use FBI statistics to help us understand crime in the US and anatomy to understand vital targets to hit – we can use CDC statistics, medical literature and physiology to find ways to minimize our risk of becoming infected with SARS-CoV-2.

Shoshin Ryu divides its self-defense responses to a violent attack into three general strategies:

1. **Evade**
2. **Control**
3. **Injure (smash)**

Each self-defense attack for yudansha (black belt) has three different responses depending upon the situation. Let's take a look at this approach to the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its disease COVID-19. Understand that one virus particle won't make you sick – depending on your body's immune system, you can fight off a rather large number of viral particles. With this in mind, the key is to not take in a lot of virus particles at any one time or over the course of a few hours or a day. That said, it can take only one exposure to make you very sick – so persistence and awareness are key. Do what you need to stay safe and stay calm. Let's see what our martial perspective towards SARS-CoV-2 should lead to:



Evade: we can gain several methods to “evade” the virus from the CDC and various medical journals.

- Stay home – limit exposure, go out only when necessary.
- Don't go to areas that are high risk – restaurants, bars, churches or other large gatherings, especially indoors.
- Consider taking Zinc – this may limit the ability of the virus to get into your body.
- Know if you are at high risk - over 65 years old, obese, diabetic, heart disease, kidney disease, COPD, cancer patients and patients taking immunosuppressive drugs.
- Remember that people are contagious two days BEFORE they have symptoms. This is different from the flu, for

example, so limit the number of people you hang out with.

- Exercise, eat healthy, laugh lots and get plenty of rest – all will boost your immune system.
- Use an N-95 or KN-95 mask – these medical masks can help you evade the virus as long as you keep other guidelines in place – like social distancing.

Control: the amount of virus you take in by performing the following:

- Wear a mask whenever you go to populated areas or when grocery shopping. This limits the amount of virus you take in, so your body's immune system can better work to prevent infections.
- Keep **at least six feet away from others**. This limits the number of virus you are exposed to so your immune system can fight it off.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. It's especially important to wash before eating or preparing food; before touching your face; after using the restroom; after leaving a public place; after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; after handling your mask; after changing a diaper; after caring for someone sick; and after touching animals or pets. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains **at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Take Vitamin D (1,000-2,000 IU daily) – this has been shown to limit the virus' ability to infect and limits severity. About 50% of Americans are Vitamin D deficient.

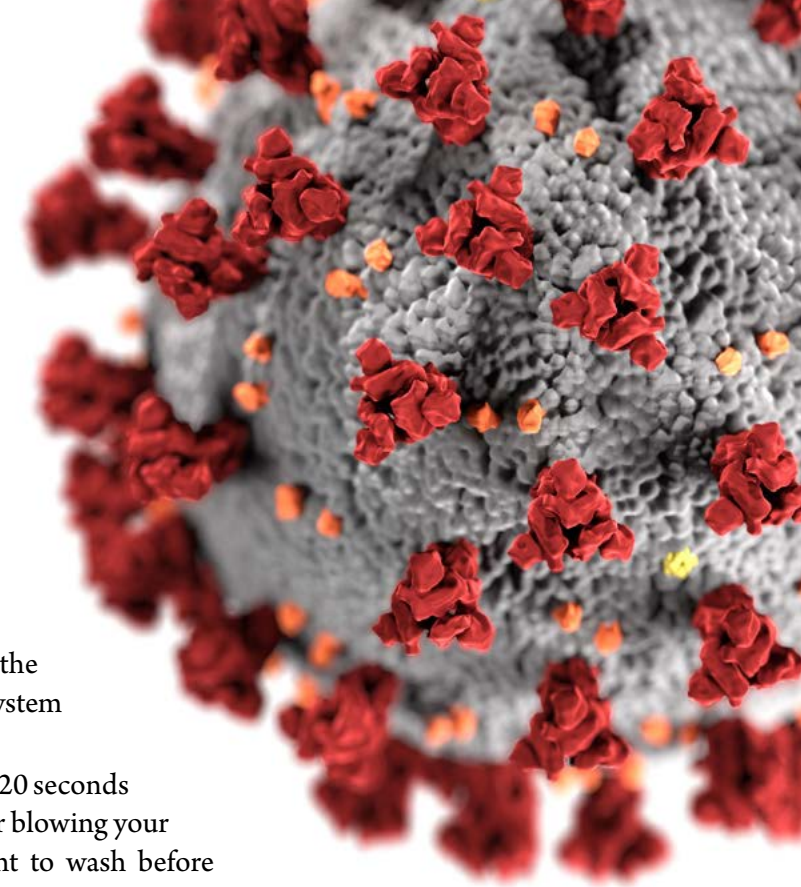
Smash or Injure: 20% of infected patients require hospitalization

- Vaccine – not yet available!
- Therapeutics – currently dexamethasone is the only drug that has been shown to decrease death rates in severely ill patients. There are many others currently under investigation.

Just as it takes time to defeat an attacker – it will take time to defeat the SARS-CoV-2 virus. At this point we can only Evade and Control. The ability to Smash or Injure is being worked on by medical researchers and pharmaceutical companies. Focus on what you have control over, we can practice good hygiene, healthy lifestyles, wearing masks, social distancing, handwashing...all of which limit the spread. Currently this is something the US isn't doing very well. For example, South Korea has kept the virus under control by following most of the suggestions above and its economy is down only 0.8%. South Korea has a much more restrictive and government-controlled society than the U.S., but it provides an example of how the above suggestions do make a difference.

What you do as an individual makes a difference. Friends and family see that you are taking the COVID threat seriously and they may follow suit and also take it seriously. Minimizing or dismissing the COVID threat only adds to disinformation and false confidence. COVID-19 doesn't care who you are, where you live, or what you think, so it's best to Evade it and Control your behavior as much as possible to ensure you and the ones you love don't become a victim.

Use your self-defense skills, mindset and persistence to limit the spread of COVID-19 and keep yourself and your family safe and well – as well as our fellow citizens. Be safe, be well, exercise, train, and laugh lots.



MUTO RYU

NO SWORD SCHOOL



Tsukahara Bokuden



The lone ronin (masterless samurai) strode along the deck of the ferry, shoving farmers and merchants aside. The passengers and crew all cringed in fear as the ronin came near them.

There was one older samurai who napped in one corner. He seemed unmoved by the commotion around him. Even more annoying to the ronin, this fellow did not seem to fear him. "Time to teach this old samurai a lesson," he thought.

The ronin kicked the old samurai and questioned his skill, for how could he nap when there was such a dangerous man as he around. The samurai said that he was too old to fight and that surely no one would be bothered by an old geezer like himself.

"Slacker," the ronin said, as he kicked the samurai again. "Not much in this old bag of bones," said the ronin and strode off. In doing so he tripped over a young couple and he cursed them and drew his sword to cut them down for their impertinence.

"Oh ronin of little worth, what school did you say you studied?" said the old man. The ronin, sword still out, told of his school and its lineage with great pride and gusto. "What kata do you have for cutting down the helpless?" the samurai said with a laugh in his voice.

"Do you wish to taste my fine sword?" the ronin said angrily. "I think that my Muto Ryu would not approve of that happening to me." said the samurai. "Muto Ryu; never heard of it" said the ronin now sensing a chance to cross swords even if the samurai was old. "Yes, my No Sword School is a very nice one."

"Nice? What kind of martial art is nice? My school is dangerous and deadly." the ronin spat. "Now get up and fight you old geezer." "It's your funeral" said the old samurai. "But it would be dangerous to the passengers to fight here, so why don't we take a small boat to that sandbar over there. This way we can fight and everyone can safely see."

"Now, you are going to see a real warrior at work" said the ronin to the passengers, who all smiled with some fear and much relief. The two boarded the boat and on the short ride over to the sandbar the old samurai said, "When we arrive you jump out first and move to the center of the island. I don't want to be cut down while I'm in the surf getting out."

"Fear not old man I need no tricks to cut the likes of you down." said the ronin.

The boat hit the shore and the ronin jumped out and moved away from the water's edge. When he looked back he saw the boat moving away. "Hey come back you coward! What are you doing?" screamed the ronin.

"Ah, now you have seen Muto Ryu in action." said the old man. "Learn something from our encounter."



SENSEI - DESHI



DESHI:

"I have been working this technique for 6 weeks now and still haven't mastered it."

SENSEI:

"I have been working that technique for 40 years now and still haven't mastered it."



NE WAZA

Ground Escape & Technical Stand-Up



1 Tori is focused on his phone, not paying attention when he is punched.



2 Tori goes down, bring his legs in and hands up



3 As uke closes in to strike, tori explodes with a groin kick



4 Tori then executes a mae geri to chin. Note both hands push down to drive hips up adding power to the kick



5 As tori drops to right side, he positions his legs – one on ankle, one on knee



6 Tori does a side kick – he is pulling on uke's ankle as he is driving uke's knee back



7 As uke goes down, tori gets up on one arm, keeping other arm aware



8 If presented, uke executes a kick to the groin (part of technical stand up)



9 Tori executes a technical stand up, staying aware



10 Tori continues to get up and creates distance before running away/calling 911

QUICK REMINDER

Awareness is a vital part of Shoshin Ryu. Learning to not be where violence happens is the most important aspect of awareness. Next is learning to identify problems and get away before violence finds you. If you miss the first two aspects, you should have enough awareness to see the attack coming and respond appropriately. Here, our tori was not aware enough and got hit – fortunately he did train with intensity and quality of motion so when the time came – he responded appropriately.



A CHAT WITH SENSEI **4** WORDS

Question 1: Sensei, there seems to be too much violence in the world and in our training, it is unsettling. I find myself being more aware of the possibility of being attacked and I want to stop training. What should I do?

Sensei: **Stop and look within.**

Question 2: Sensei, we are learning goshinjutsu (self-defense) yet Shoshin Ryu says “Learn how not to hurt others”. If someone touches me, I will use my self-defense training to take them out. How do I resolve this?

Sensei: **Stop and look within.**

Question 3: Sensei, I have looked at our Yudansha ranking system and I think we should have living 10th dans, masters, and headmasters.

Sensei: **Stop and look within.**

Question 4: (Potential Student) I really like Shoshin Ryu, but before I start I need to get in shape and lose some weight.

Sensei: **Stop and look within.**

Question 5: Sensei, I really think Sensei AB is not teaching right and at Nationals, Sensei CD told me how to do a kata that was different than how I learned it as a yellow belt – I am now a brown belt. How should I tell these Sensei they are wrong?

Sensei: **Stop and look within.**

ANALYSIS BY FOURWORDS SENSEI’S SENIOR STUDENT

Question 1. Sensei is asking the student to practice finding the answers to their questions by looking at their own thoughts and seeing them as they are without defending them or being attached to them. Some people perceive a motion as violent while others see the beauty in it. Our minds determine how we see things. Is a baseball bat swing violent or beautiful? Beauty and violence are in the kokoro (heart/mind) of the beholder. By looking within, we can start to see what we are afraid of and face it. Fear,

once exposed to the light of clear thought, fades. Think how often you have been afraid of something that was unfounded. Small children are afraid of the dark – not because they can’t see anything, but because they imagine something bad. They project their minds, their fears. Are we not the same?

Also, realize that as you grow and gain confidence you will find old repressed things popping back up. It is like not cleaning under your bed for several years and then looking under it and seeing the dirt. Vacuuming it up may be a bit uncomfortable but is a step forward. It is the same with your mind – things were repressed because you weren’t strong enough to handle them, now you are.

Lastly, the risk of being attacked doesn’t increase because you train. It won’t decrease because you stop. This worrying is a phase many students go through – keep training and it will pass.

Question 2. Ask yourself is a hand on the shoulder worth ‘taking someone out’? Is it worth the possible problems that can arise with the police or being sued? What if the hand is your 80 year old grandmother? Or your 50 year old drunk uncle? Think on these things.

Question 3. Why do you want to have 10th dans? To impress others? To build yourself up by being associated with a 10th dan teacher? If a sensei is good, does he need to be acclaimed? Being called a 5th dan or a 10th dan doesn’t change ones skills.

There is a Zen story of two monks who are walking when one says “*Oh, there is Master Tanaka and Master Suzuki.*” “*They are not masters.*” said the elder of the two monks, I will show you. “*Hey, Master, Master!*” Both men looked. “*See*” said the elder monk, “*They are not masters, they looked. A master would never answer to the title master.*”

Question 4. Please look at why you wish to postpone becoming what you want. Is it that you don’t think you can do it or don’t deserve it yet? Or is it that you might fail? If you wait until you are perfect you will never start! Accept yourself and build from there. Please remember “*All men die, few every really live.*” – apply it to yourself. Start class – just go for it and live!

Question 5. Do you think as a brown belt you know the purpose or the method of all types of teachers? Are there not several paths to the top of the mountain? Going slowly and winding around; going straight up; starting counter clockwise; or starting the journey clockwise up the mountain. There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Let go of judging and learn as much as you can!

As to you being taught kata or nage waza (throw) or goshinjutsu (self-defense) differently as a brown belt from when you were a yellow belt; do you still only have the yellow belt’s understanding or have you grown in understanding and skill? If yes, then shouldn’t your kata grow with you and not remain static?

How you learn any waza (technique) is always just an approximation – you keep refining it your whole life if you are diligent.



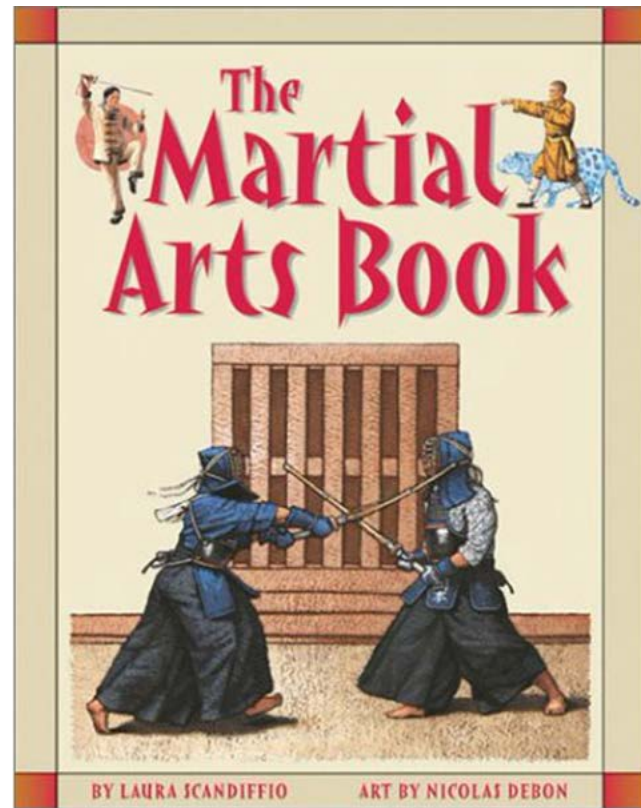
Book Review: The Martial Arts Book

Shelley Epstein | Mudansha | Albuquerque, NM

Browsing through bookstores you never know what treasure you will find. One day while browsing I came across a martial arts kids' book, *The Martial Arts Book*, that I thought might answer some questions in ways your kids would understand. Below are some things that I took away from the book.

For instance, I learned that the DO in DOJO means path or way. There are many paths we can take: music, dance, painting, martial arts, and not just one at the exclusion of others. Many masters of the martial arts believe that a strong mind and a strong body go together. Focusing is hard, especially at first, but after a while it gets easier and that makes it easier to master a new move.

I also learned that in AD 250 that a Shaolin monk, Bodhidharma, went to China and taught monks there his beliefs. ZEN BUDDHISM: Empty your cup!!! They learned what empty your cup means - it is to let go and listen so you can learn without prejudice. Bodhidharma taught the monks to keep their bodies and minds strong.



A major idea, perhaps the major idea, was to avoid fighting. You need a sharp mind and self-control. Bodhidharma gave the Chinese monks two special skills: a sharp mind and self-control. He used the first to avoid attacks and the second to solve a problem without losing his temper. The book mentions something that Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War*: "To win 100 battles in one hundred wars is not the ultimate skill, to stop the enemy without fighting is the ultimate skill."

The book talks about different approaches to martial arts. For example, even within one kind of martial art, Kung Fu, there are two basic kinds of martial arts, hard-external and soft-internal. Hard styles meet force with force, fast powerful strokes of arms and legs. Soft styles, like TaiChi, use dodges and throws to avoid attack. When practiced by skilled martial artists, movements flow.

That leads me to katas and to the end of this article. A kata is a series of attack and defense movements, performed without an actual physical opponent. Nobody gets hurt. A kata flows from one movement to another, like a dance. There are katas in many of the martial arts styles. Try different styles and **EMPTY YOUR CUP!!!!**

By Laura Scandiffio, art by Nicholas Debon; www.annickpress.com 2003, 64 pages
ISBN: 1-55037-777-9 (hardback); 1-55037-777-0 (paperback)



ZENSHO

live completely

Yamaoka Tesshu often passed a bakery and admired its signboard overhead which read Zen-Sho-An. One day he inquired about its origin and learned that long ago a Chinese Zen priest had once come to Japan and brushed this sign to designate his hermitage. The priest was later called to Kamakura to instruct the Shogun and left this sign with the current owner's ancestor who had been kind to him. This idea of zensho, to 'live completely with every ounce of one's strength in the present moment' struck Tesshu as the perfect name for his temple. Tesshu founded Zensho-an in memory of all those who died in civil war during Japan's Meiji Restoration. Life can change in an instant, it is good to remember to live fully now.



SHOSHIN RYU
— MARTIAL ARTS —





MARTIAL ARTS MATCHING

Match the words in the left column to their meaning in the right column. Answers on Page 32.

Atemi	martial art emphasizing effectiveness
Budo	ground techniques
Bujutsu	martial way
Bunkai	no mind
Chudan	application of a part of kata
Dojo	falling practice
Gedan	breaking or cutting practice
Jodan	middle
Gi	martial arts training hall
Goshinjutsu	black belt
Heiho	upper
Ryu	self defense
Kansetsu waza	strategy
Kuzushi	joint locking technique
Migi	off balancing
Hidari	right
Mushin	left
Ne Waza	Traditional Japanese uniform
Nage waza	lower
Mae	tradition or school
Rei	striking
Seiken	fist
Tameshiware	front
Ukemi	bow
Yudansha	throwing techniques

FORREST GUMP GOES TO HEAVEN

The day finally arrived: Forrest Gump dies and goes to Heaven. He is met at the Pearly Gates by Saint Peter himself. The gates are closed, however, and Forrest approaches the gatekeeper. Saint Peter says, "Well, Forrest, it's certainly good to see you. We have heard a lot about you. I must inform you that the place is filling up fast, and we've been administering an entrance examination for everyone. The tests are fairly short, but you need to pass before you can get into Heaven."

Forrest responds, "It shore is good to be here Saint Peter. I was looking forward to this. Nobody ever told me about any entrance exams. Shore hope the test ain't too hard; life was a big enough test as it was." Saint Peter goes on, "Yes, I know Forrest. But, the test I have for you is only three questions. Here is the first: What days of the week begin with the letter 'T'? Second, how many seconds are there in a year? Third, what is God's first name?"

Forrest goes away to think the questions over. He returns the next day and goes up to Saint Peter to try to answer the exam questions. Saint Peter waves him up and asks, "Now that you have had a chance to think the questions over, tell me your answers."

Forrest says, "Well, the first one, -how many days of the week begin with the letter 'T'?" "Shucks, that one's easy; that'd be Today and Tomorrow!" The saint's eyes open wide and he exclaims, "Forrest! That's not what I was thinking, but ... you do have a point though, and I guess I didn't specify, so I give you credit for that answer."

"How about the next one" says Saint Peter, "how many seconds in a year?" "Now that one's harder," says Forrest. "But, I thunk and thunk about that, and I guess the only answer can be twelve." Astounded, Saint Peter says, "Twelve! Twelve! Forrest, how in Heaven's name could you come up with twelve seconds in a year?" Forrest says, "Shucks, there gotta be twelve: January second, February second, March second..." "Hold it," interrupts Saint Peter. "I see where you're going with it." "And I guess I see your point, though that wasn't quite what I had in mind. I'll give you credit for that one too."

"Let's go on with the next and final question," says Saint Peter, "Can you tell me God's first name?" Forrest says, "Well shore, I know God's first name. Everybody probly knows It's Howard." "Howard?" asks Saint Peter. "What makes you think it's 'Howard'?" Forest answers, "It's in the prayer." "The prayer?" asks Saint Peter, "Which prayer?" "The Lord's Prayer," responds Forest: "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Howard be thy name..."

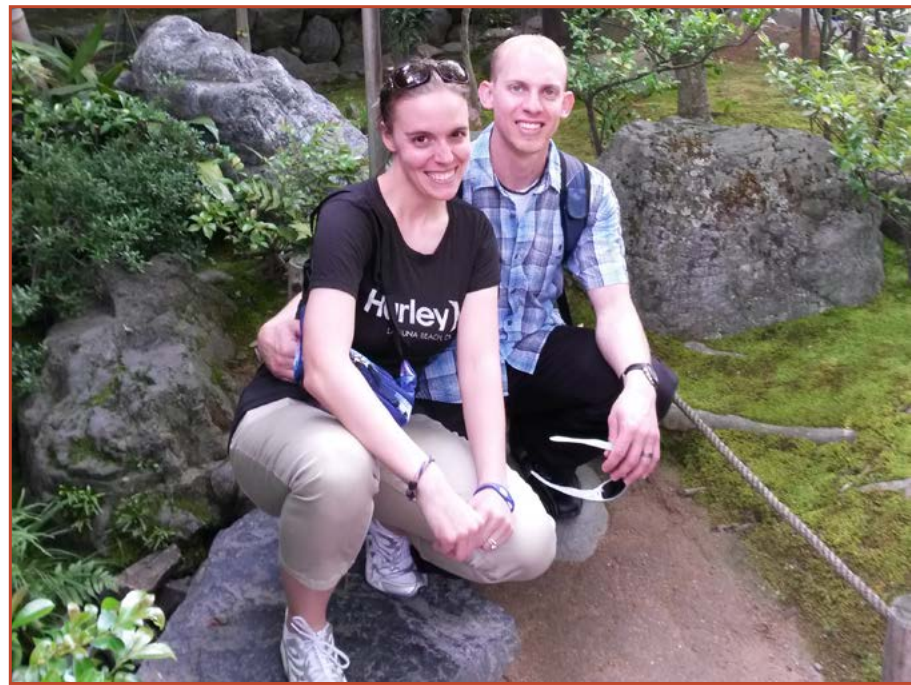


VISITING JAPAN AS A SHOSHIN RYU PRACTITIONER'S SPOUSE

Kelsey Stetz | Idaho Falls, ID

My journey to Japan started with Shane (my husband and SR practitioner) already being in Japan, and me meeting up with two other spouses Jen and Rita, to meet our husbands in Kyoto, Japan. After flying from Boise to Seattle then from Seattle to Narita, I met up with Jen and Rita and caught a train to Kyoto. When we got to the JR rail office to purchase our train passes, we found out that we would need to hurry and we barely made it to catch the last train to Kyoto. When we finally made it to the Kyoto station, we hailed a cab to the hotel and

My first night in Kyoto was very interesting because I hadn't adjusted to the time change yet so I woke up early and waited for Shane to get up. I took a picture from the hotel room and posted it on Facebook and Instagram and then we went down to breakfast. At breakfast I saw the rest of our Shoshin Ryu group. The food at the breakfast buffet had odd breakfast food items such as potato salad, Jello, and French fries mixed in with typical breakfast foods. That was also my first time having authentic Japanese green tea.



buckled up tight because the driver was watching TV while he was driving. This part of the trip was a very big step for me because I could not speak the language, it was my first time traveling to a foreign country, and it was my first time traveling without my husband or family.

Throughout the day we toured the city and we saw many temples. The landscaping of the Japanese temples was perfectly cared for and I liked the tranquility and design of the Zen like gardens. Every temple we went to we had to take off our shoes (which is part of Japanese tradition in certain places). While going to one of the temples there was street food that consisted of what looked like mini octopuses that were fried. I didn't try it but Shane and some of the others did, and when the vendor removed the food from the fryer it appeared as if they were still moving. One of the awesome temples we got to visit was the famous Golden Temple. This temple is a very popular tourist attraction,

partly because of the beauty of the gardens surrounding it, but primarily because the top two stories of the pavilion are covered with pure gold. While touring the temples we ate at a traditional Japanese table in which we sat on the floor. It was my first experience with Japanese dining tradition along with first green tea ice cream cone (which was excellent).

Answers from Kids' Corner

Atemi = striking, Budo = martial way, Bujutsu = martial art emphasizing effectiveness, Bunkai = application of a part of kata, Chudan = middle, Dojo = martial arts training hall, Gedan = lower, Jodan = upper, Gi = Traditional Japanese uniform for martial arts, Goshinjutsu = self defense, Heiho = strategy, Ryu = Tradition or school, Kansetsu waza = joint locking technique, Kuzushi = off balancing, Migi = Right, Hidari = left, Mushin = no mind, Ne Waza = ground techniques, Nage waza = throwing techniques, Mae = front, Rei = bow, Seiken = fist, Tameshiwaza = breaking or cutting practice, Ukemi = falling practice, Yudansha = black belt

The next day we boarded a bullet train (locally known as Shinkansen) to Kamakura from Kyoto. When riding the trains in Japan there are times of the day that the trains are packed with people (elbow to elbow). In Kamakura we hiked up a mountain and saw some ancient statues and some breathtaking views of the city and ocean. In the city of Kamakura, we stayed at a more traditional hotel (called Hotel Kamakura) with a Japanese bath (which the bath/shower was not in the room but downstairs and the toilet was upstairs). The hotel staff were very kind and very nice to accommodate our group by getting WiFi installed and by providing inexpensive laundry service. Our room at the hotel had a key that you had to use to turn on and off the lights, as opposed to a standard light switch. Some of us went to the Great Buddha of Kamakura, which is the second tallest bronze Buddha statue in Japan. During our stay at Kamakura we traveled to Tokyo and visited Kobayashi Aikido. Following a short training session we had a traditional sit-down Japanese dinner with some of members of the local Aikido group.

I also decided to try the food at an authentic American-restaurant: McDonalds. I was surprised to find a very different menu than your traditional American McDonalds. At the McDonalds in Japan they have more options



with fish and chicken on the menu, as well as sweets such as green tea ice cream. In Japan they have several different varieties of the American candy, one of which was Green Tea flavored Kit Kat chocolate bars. I found these delicious, therefore, I brought several boxes home and handed some of them out to my co-workers who really enjoyed them as well.



Going to Japan was a great experience because it gave me a different perspective on another country. The food and culture was nothing like I had experienced before. One main take away I have, was that the people of Japan are very nice (they were willing to help tourists out in finding their way around) and they really take care of their history.





\$112 ALL SIZES



SHOSHIN RYU
— MARTIAL ARTS —

GEAR



\$22

\$22

\$27

VARIETY OF HAT STYLES



\$18 PRACTICE QUICK DRAW KNIFE - BLACK



\$22 ALL SIZES - BLACK ONLY



\$25 STICKS



\$25 UNISEX LONG SLEEVE



\$85 + \$5 SHIPPING - SR DUFFLE BAG



\$16 YOUTH - BLACK



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AVAILABLE ONLINE!**

<https://squareup.com/store/shoshin-ryu>

“Awareness is the greatest agent for change.”

- Eckhart Tolle

