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BUDO

news

The Official Publication of the International Kokondo Association (IKA)

February 2013



Upcoming IKA Events:

- Feb 8-10: BEMA Seminar
- Mar 3: Honbu Yudanshakai
- Mar 9: Northeast Jukido Shiai
- Apr 7 : Honbu Yudanshakai
- Apr 12-13: St. Louis Seminar
- April 27: New England Awards Banquet
- May 3-5 BEMA Seminar
- May 18: NE Kid's Awards Event
- May 19: Honbu Yudanshakai
- June 2: Honbu Yudanshakai
- June 7-9: Bakersfield Seminar
- July 7: Honbu Yudanshakai
- July 25-27: IKA National Seminar - CT



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Kaicho's Korner

I am fascinated by the stories of life. The tales friends tell of each other's exploits, those fond reminiscences of both folly and wisdom. The myriad yarns told by movies and TV. I appreciate the heroic myths of biography and the horrific daily news reports. I acknowledge the large obfuscations of politicians and the simple truths of the American people. My profession leads me to converse regularly with my elders those in their 80's and 90's. I listen to their warm accounts of yesteryear.

We are the stories we tell of ourselves and of each other. If they are positive stories we grow and prosper. If they are negative narratives we wither and decay. In Kokondo we are lucky to be in an art form which has always been passed down from teacher to student through the moves and techniques primarily augmented with the stories of application and history. The Kata themselves tell stories of triumph through technical perfection against great odds.

Shihan reminded all of his students that individual techniques are the alphabet. As you progress you develop words, then sentences and finally

paragraphs of movement which are written as much by the attackers choices as your own.

Every Sensei and Master teaches so that we grow Kokondo's story. Knowing the tales of Shihan, the sayings of Master Longo and the personal stories of the Masters and Sensei will create sign posts for your experience. Thus, you gain knowledge of where we all have been and where we are going.

This Budo News is a feast of well written and important tales told by our authors. Please feel free to submit your writings to me at Kaichoika@gmail.com. Everything we learn and express helps others as well.

Testing the Limits

By Shanna Merceron (ikkyu), Jukido Academy, Palm Coast, FL)

My breath came out in huffs, my chest heaved like I had just run a marathon, and I could practically hear the *plink, plink* of my sweat dripping off my body and hitting the floor, staining the blue mats black. My hair clung to my face like tentacles to its prey and my ponytail laid in a tangle at the nape of my neck. The baggy white uniform I wore felt like a suit of armor with all the weight, and none of the protection.

Just moments before I had been sitting quietly, yet anxiously, on the fuzzy cobalt mats in the dojo, listening to my sensei shuffle papers on his clipboard and slide on his spectacles. The smell of perspiration hung in the air, tickling noses if you paid attention to it. While the students were silent, the tension, excitement, and nervousness hung in the air, practically ringing in our ears. After several long moments, my sensei adjusted his proper sitting position and cleared his throat, breaking the silence like a wave crashing onto the shore. Every student sat up straighter, adjusted their hands, and attempted to make eye contact with him as Sensei's eyes scanned the ranks, before finally resting on me.

"Shanna! Up please." I almost jumped when his voice bellowed my name, and I stood up as shakily as a new-born colt. I moved quickly, maneuvering my body between those in front of me, careful not to step on any toes, before I took my place in the center of the dojo, facing my sensei. I hoped the many eyes on me couldn't see my knees quaking and hear my shallow breathing. It felt like my stomach had dropped to the floor and sprung out the window. Butterflies, birds, and insects filled the hole in my gut, twisted my insides, and spiked my adrenaline. Sensei carefully chose partners for me, my "attackers" and they lined up in front



of me, all with expressions of honor, seriousness, and encouragement on their faces. Hoping the pierce of pain would clear my head, I subtly dug my trimmed nails into my palms, leaving crescent moons that glowed white, while I attempted to prepare myself mentally for the big event about to occur.

Oh my gosh, I thought. *I'm being tested*. At the time I was 14 and striving for brown belt, the rank before black belt. I had painstakingly waited for that day. But that didn't mean the test would be easy. Readiness surged through me, and I hoped I wouldn't screw up

My sensei belted out the Japanese names of Jukido Jujitsu's techniques and I tried not to hesitate as my limbs flung out in skilled

precision, striking my attacker where necessary and hurling their body to the ground. Attack after attack kept coming and it felt like my lungs would spontaneously combust as each breath became harder and harder to take in. At last my sensei's voice fell silent and I stood there facing my partners, my palms lying flat against my sides, my back straight, and feet together. My heart did jumping jacks in my chest, pounding against my rib cage like it wanted to escape.

Sensei had the students attacking me line up behind one another and if I had hackles they would have risen in anticipation. Instead of showcasing my knowledge of an individual technique as he called it out to me, I now had to have assailant after assailant come at me, their visages twisting into grimaces with the effort, as they moved at the speed of light and struck at me with techniques I didn't know were coming

When Sensei motioned to begin, a tall black belt student ran at me, wrapped his arms around my middle from the side in a tight vise, and attempted to drag me away. Launching my defense, I gripped his arms and swung my left leg into the tender spot on his shin. Letting out a hiss of pain, he loosened his grip and I whirled my left foot around, placing it on the perimeter of his body and dropped my other leg out, bending at the knee, as I pulled and popped his body over my right leg. When his body smacked into the mats, it sounded like a bag of bricks being dropped from a four story building.

My attacker slapped the mat to absorb the impact and I didn't even see him get up because I suddenly had another attacker crash into me and knock me to the ground. I rolled onto my back as the assailant squeezed his hands around my neck, effectively choking me. I grabbed his right wrist with my left hand and shot my right hand across the space between my face and his, lifting up my hips as I did. He flew off of me and I delivered a swift kick to his groin before standing up as hastily as I could. I glimpsed a fist swing towards my face out of my peripheral vision, and I twirled my body into it, bring up my arm to parry the attack, and stepping in to throw the attacker over my hip. Time seemed to have slowed, and I could tell my adrenaline rush was coming to an end. My hands shook as the

thought of failure flitted across my mind. I hoped my eight years of dedication showed; I knew what to do, and just wanted to prove I deserved advancement in rank to myself and to my sensei.

I continued to take down attacker after attacker until the need to retch shuddered through my body. At last, moments after my adrenaline rush sputtered to a halt, Sensei called for us all to stop. We all snapped to attention. I tried to keep my posture straight and prevent my legs from collapsing under me. My labored breathing was so loud that it bounced around in my skull and amplified across the dojo. Sweat trickled down my spine, acting as the adhesive between my skin and drenched tank top. The faint smell of my perfume had soured, and my frizzy locks had wound themselves around my hair elastic, ruthlessly pulling on my sensitive scalp. Sensei silently evaluated me with his eyes, his dark brow shadowing what lurked in their depths.

Silence fell on the dojo like Santa's sleigh on a roof; only those anxiously waiting for it could hear it. I knew that my test had come to an end.

"Bow to each other," he announced.

"Bow to me," he continued.

"Ossu!" We chorused, using a positive Japanese phrase.

"Sit down please," he commanded politely and I moved back to my seat. Every muscle I had groaned and whined with my movements and I collapsed onto the mat as gracefully as I could. Once I got comfortable I heard the roar of applause from my fellow Jukido-ka. Hands clashed together like thunder and my strong emotion of exultance made me feel like I had been struck by lightning. I looked into the stunned faces of the younger students and proud faces of my more experienced peers and I felt a little better about myself. Sensei met my eyes and he gave me a slight smile before calling up another student for their test.

Konsan

By Emily Burlison, BEMA, Kent, WA

I am standing at attention. Feet shoulder length apart, fists tight by the hips, eyes focused somewhere beyond the wall of the dojo, constantly striving to stand straighter.

"Preparation," Sensei commands, and I make the upward, downward cross of Kokondo with my hands. I am standing in a musubi dachi. Heels together and toes apart, left hand crossed over the right.

"Hajime!"

The second I hear this word, I feel somebody's arms reach under my own, attempting a full nelson. At the same speed as the attacker, I raise my hands near my forehead. Not one hand grabbing the other, as the technique would really work, but in the properly incorrect manner shown to us by tradition (*Editor's note: Author is referencing the stylized aspect of Kata as opposed to the bunkai grab hands touch your forehead, etc.*).

My mind remains clear as I spring into action. Before I know it, my hands smack one another as I kiai. I grab the assailant's head and turn around, leaving him no option but to follow. Fear overcomes him as he desperately strives to keep up. He cannot.

As I twist his neck, I feel the delicate filigree of sinews rip apart like Velcro. The fear in his eyes morphs into a cold stare. Just a little further and the vertebrae snap. The echo of dropping bodies fills the room as a dozen others' attackers fall in unison with mine.

I close my eyes and see another attacker running in at me, and just as fast I use his energy to push him away, with all the strength and adrenaline as though he were real. I kick him, I strike his collar bone, I elbow him square in the chest, and the entire room kiais.

Before I even finish the last strike, someone materializes in front of me. I can see only the short, pony-tailed brown-belt in a kiba dachi in the mirror, waving at me with three consecutive counter-strikes. But I can feel an attacker go down in between us, and so can she.

Immediately, the only thing in the world is the guy coming in on the left. I can't wait. I jump to him, strike, grab his head, and then throw him to the ground. He starts to rise, so I step over him. He tries to grab my collar, but before he knows it, I sweep his hand aside and my fist smashes into his face, my knee crushes his ribcage, then my foot thumps into his side as I move to kick the next guy. I manage a sacrifice sweep, and kick the new guy from the ground. Then I kick the last guy again for good measure.

I come up into seiza. Perfectly calm, I reflect. To an outsider, I had been flopping around on the ground. They would've probably called an ambulance. But to the entire row of like-minded warriors kneeling perfectly beside me, I am doing Konsan. I am living Konsan.

As quickly as my thoughts had started, someone grabs my collar from behind and above me. Taking advantage of my seated position, I grab his hand and throw him. As I kneel beside him, now lying helpless before me, I finish him with two strikes, and kick him again as I stand.



And just like that, another punch. A simple block, then a knee to the face. I jump out of his way as I turn all the way around, blocking and backing up. I am not only fighting for my life, but rushing back to my starting spot. To end in the position I had started—perfectly in line—it is a way of tradition. Few things are more important than tradition.

I am exactly where I began; that last guy is on the ground. Yet, some distant enemy sends one more attacker my way in a desperate attempt to finish me. He takes a swing at my head. Without bothering to block, I break his arm in one simple, fast, and powerful motion. He falls.

I am perfectly still; a statue, a moment in time. Prepared to walk through the one word portal to the world I had left behind, or to remain as long as my Sensei chooses. But at that very moment, Sensei calls "Naore," and I step out, making the Kokondo cross once more. No longer a samurai or warrior in the unique world of the Kon kata, I am back to reality. I am standing at attention.

Nobody clapped, nobody made a sound. I looked up from the paper and tried to decipher the expressions of my peers and teacher. I could not. After a sufficiently awkward silence, I turned my paper in and sat down.

After everyone else had finished their "passion essays," a few boys approached me and asked if my story was true. I didn't know what they meant. It's a kata. I have done the kata. That much was true. So I responded, "Yeah."

Their eyes widened. "So you actually beat up all of those guys? You really killed someone?"

I burst out laughing. What a ludicrous notion! I had set the scene in the dojo, I had clearly described the bunkai as bunkai, and I had even directly stated that it was a kata. Plus, there were several places where I described an attacker as invisible or imaginary. Clearly, the boy was joking.

Then I realized that I was the only one laughing. The faces around the room (my teacher included) stared at me uneasily. They were concerned for my mental health, and were watching me very carefully as though they were afraid.

Wow. I thought it had been obvious. After all, doesn't every teenager spend their spare time doing kata? Don't they all accidentally say 'Ossu' instead of 'okay' sometimes? Doesn't everyone tie a belt faster than they can tie a shoe? Strangely enough, they don't.

I tried to imagine having no context by which to understand the essay, and it felt weird. I considered the various ways to approach this. I could explain, but they may not understand. Besides, I had already sabotaged their opinion of my sanity.

"Yeah," I said in a nonchalant fashion. "The events in this essay have occurred many, many times." There was an intake of air. Satisfied, I continued, "Would you like to see?" Their reaction was priceless.

As soon as they settled down, I did the opening move of Konsan. After the second attacker, I said "I just broke someone's neck," and then proceeded.

Florida Seminar 2012

By Jukido Academy – Palm Coast, FL

The 2012 seminar circuit of the International Kokondo Association concluded with the Florida Kokondo Seminar in Palm Coast, Florida. IKA members from Florida, Connecticut, California, and Washington benefited from the intense seminar led by Kaicho Howard and Master Robert. There were nearly 100 participants in all. Below is a very brief summary of an immensely expansive seminar.

The first night was defined by dynamic movement. Kaicho and Master Robert led truly lively self-defense and throwing drills. More than focusing on technique alone; the first night was dominated by applying technique in the potential chaos of real fighting situations. Students worked with and "against" each other in jiyu (freestyle) throwing drills that weren't quite karate kumite or jujitsu randori – but took vigorous elements of both. The first night set the tone of fighting spirit that dominated the remainder of the special weekend.



The second day began with IKA youth members refining a variety of throwing techniques and self-defense applications. The children were excited at the opportunity to ask the senior sensei a variety of questions about the history of Jukido Jujitsu. Of course, board breaking and picture taking are seminar traditions well established at the Florida dojo.

Later that evening was a street clothing session with a strong, although not exclusive, focus on advanced disarming. Students performed disarming techniques from ground fighting (both with attacker on the ground with tori and standing over tori with weapons), advanced gun disarming, proper utilization of a pistol after



disarming, and defense against being choked with a rope/cord from the rare.

The final morning of the seminar began with a session exclusive to black belts. The technical focus was on leg throws, including: harai goshi, hane goshi, and uchi mata. In addition to refining the individual nage-waza, black belts were masterfully instructed on how to apply these throws in creative situations while allowing the basic principle of kuzushi to always maintain its primacy.

The final session of the seminar was synthesizes the all the previous techniques and themes covered previously. Group throwing drills were also emphasized and produced very clear progressive results in the techniques of all participants.

The seminar closed with a question and answer period that left all students better informed and deeply inspired. The telling of Kokondo's remarkable oral history by Kaicho closed the seminar...but left all hungry for more!



Jukidoka Forced to Defend Himself at 4am!

Letter to Master Betancourt from his student *(currently inactive due to academic pursuits)* Ron Wahlberg
(Yellow Belt)

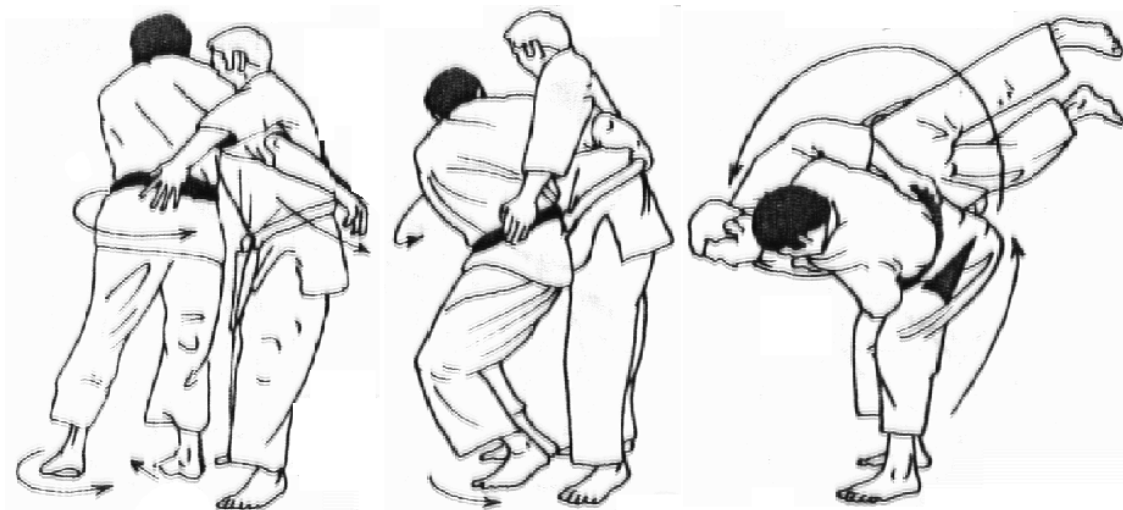
Hey Master Betancourt!

Been quite some time since I have seen you! Soon, I intend on making my way back into Jukido once I graduate (in December).

I was thinking of you the other day when I had to use the skills and techniques that you so perfectly instructed me in. Before my clinical nursing rotations, I always go to the Goldroc Diner in West Hartford at like 4:30am for breakfast. When I was about to leave, two intoxicated individuals walked through the door and began to touch a female waitress in very inappropriate ways. In the diner, there were only two men (myself and a HUGE waiter). When we both stood up to confront them, one of the men threw a punch at the waiter and connected...soon thereafter the waiter made very quick work of that individual. The second drunk person came at me however (WITH A KNIFE IN HAND)! Remembering what you taught me, I was able to disarm the person, and elbowed him in the side, my knee to the back of his, then Ogoshi and bouncing off the floor he went (sorry, I certainly didn't protect him.....hope you forgive me!). Once he was down, I never lost hold of his arm, and subsequently turned my body over him and immobilized his arm while sitting on his chest. The entire time I was reminding him that I would break his arm if he tried to move. Needless to say, he didn't try to move anymore. Three minutes later, the cops arrived! This entire time, I was in hospital scrubs with a stethoscope around my neck. The cops thanked me and I was pretty damn proud of myself! I just wanted to share this with you because not only was I pretty damn proud of myself but also of the training you gave me! I was also hoping that you would share this experience with the students; reminding them that stuff happens, and being ready for the unexpected is incredibly important!

Sincerely,

Ron Wahlberg



St. Louis Kokondo Seminar

April 12 & 13, 2013

Notes from the **St. Louis Kokondo** Facebook page:



Have we mentioned lately that April 12th and 13th is our annual Midwest Seminar with Kaicho Howard?? We haven't???

April 12th and 13th is our annual Midwest Seminar with Kaicho Howard!!! There will be new faces there and the out-of-town/state guest list is growing.

Come join the fun! You know you want to!!!"

Contact Sensei Martin at
tchilde@yahoo.com

Budo News

Interested in submitting an article or an article idea? Submissions can be made to the following email address:

jukidoacademy@gmail.com

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IKA Honbu Website: www.kokondo.org

Discover Authentic Martial Arts

Join us at the 2013

EAST COAST REGIONAL Championships!



March 9, 2013

12:30 TO 4:00PM

(Doors open 12:15pm)

Smith Middle School

Auditorium

216 Addison Rd, Glastonbury CT

06033

NOTE NEW LOCATION

General Admission – Adults \$13.00 - Children (7-15) \$7.00
- Children (6 and under) FREE! Participant Fee -\$15.00

See your Sensei for your registration and waiver form!
Must be returned to your Sensei before March, 3rd 2013

1st PLACE AWARDED TROPHY 2nd and 3rd PLACES
RECEIVE MEDAL
ALL PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE

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