

Upcoming IKA Events:

- Feb 11: Randori Tournament
- Feb 17-19: BEMA Seminar
- Feb 26: Honbu Yudanshaka
- March 3: All-Dojo Gasshuku (CT)
- March 18: Honbu Yudanshakai
- April 13-14: Midwest Seminar

...more dates to come

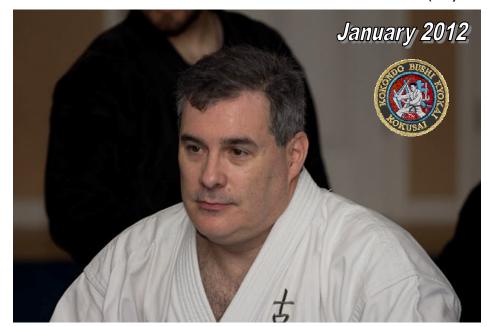


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The Official Publication of the International Kokondo Association (IKA)



Kaicho's Korner

Quite a few years ago, I remember getting two phone calls one right after the other. The first is Shihan Arel telling me that he had been asked by someone to do private lessons on Saturday Mornings and he can't do it. The second is from John Walsh asking if we could meet and discuss my teaching him. John is a student who had private lessons from Shihan back when I was the uke. His sense of humor helped create mine.

I say yes and let's meet this coming Saturday. When I go over before we can talk details, his wife, Marybeth, makes a huge lunch and as I am getting a diet coke I see on the refrigerator a pistol target with the absolute center blown out. Turning to John I ask him if he shoots. Without treating my question with the obvious "duh" he instead points to the target and says, "Look no powder burns." Thus, begins my reacquaintance to John's verbal acuity and sense of humor. Talking about pistols and shooting John says that he can teach me to shoot and I agree to teach him Karate. So begins one of the enduring friendships of my life.

When I see Shihan the next Monday he of course asks about my conversation with John. I explain my arrangement. Shihan enthusiastically agrees. I realize now he knew how important this would

be for my training. Shihan, without John in class for over a decade, proceeds to outline exactly what I need to know to teach within John's physical boundaries. He also prophetically warns me of John's lazy left foot and his mismatched stances.

Each Saturday morning I teach karate bunkai and self-defense especially working on disarming. John's wife Marybeth makes a scrumptious and extensive lunch for us, then to the range. While shooting John tells me about his training at Gun Sight Ranch under some legendary instructors.

This pleasant and effective arrangement goes on for years, under John's tutelage, I am becoming an NRA instructor and together we train and test quite a few people. John has the ability to take the most timid person through the pistol course.

John and those Saturday mornings have a direct relationship to the disarming taught at any Kokondo dojo. John Walsh, Master Bob Longo, Shihan and me would work specifically on disarming. The questions I have from Saturday are answered by Shihan and Master Longo on Sunday or Monday classes. John's analytical mind and keen intelligence require direct thoughtful answers. I knew there was a unique bond between John and Shihan based on mutual respect and admiration.

Life, health, time and Weekend Seminars interfere with the regularity of these classes. Time passes again I receive a call from John; we begin classes again on Wednesday afternoon for less active Kokondo-ka. Again these informal classes become regular and more formalized. Each class member is a Yudanshakai member in good standing and Shihan waits for regular updates. These classes become my strength in the time of Shihan's sickness. John's kindness his care and concern expressed to Shihan and me is a buttress. We three have lunch together topics range from martial arts and Kokondo through discussions of politics and economics. I learn so much from Shihan and John in observation and listening.

Shihan passes away and John helps me plan the future of Kokondo from the non- technical side. He does this through the art of the question. He is still an instructor still making me aim correctly still having my sight on the target.

John's advancing physical difficulties test even this great man's strength and faith. We continue to lunch. He continues to show me the power of the individual; through the love he shows his family and wife, Marybeth, and the care he shows for humanity. These afternoons teach me invaluable lessons.

He passes, another phone call this from his son, Michael, asking me to be a part of the funeral. I receive this call while being driven home from shoulder surgery. To know I could not be part of this great man's service and speak to his family directly is one of the hardest realizations I have ever made.

Shihan and John are in many ways my spiritual fathers and I can only hope that I can teach with as much humor and Joy. May we all live each day with such love, strength and intelligence. Gentleman I miss you both so very truly.

OSSU!

Mr. John Walsh (nidan) Obituary

Credit to and published by The Hartford Courant on December 28, 2011



John B. Walsh, 78, of West Hartford, beloved husband of Marybeth O'Reilly Walsh, and cherished father, grandfather, brother and friend, passed away on Monday (December 26, 2011) at St. Francis

Hospital with his loving family at his side. John had courageously fought a long battle against cancer as well as a number of other lifethreatening conditions over the past five years.

Born in Hartford on Christmas Day in 1933 to the late Maurice and Anne Walsh, he was raised in West Hartford and graduated from William H. Hall High School in 1952. He went on to Georgetown University School of Foreign Service where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree with honors in 1959. He spent two years on active duty in the U.S. Army during the Korean War followed by six years in the Army Reserves. John received his Master of Arts degree in Sociology from St. Joseph College in 1965.

John is survived by the love of his life, his wife Marybeth O'Reilly Walsh; Timothy, Mary, William and Elizabeth Walsh of New York, NY; Michael Walsh and Julie Chao of Washington, D.C.; and Matthew, Janet, Kate, Ayla, and John Walsh of Lagrange, GA. He is also survived by his sisters, Anne Flannery of Farmington, and Marybeth Dunning of Sarasota, FL; sister-in-law Claire Walsh of Niantic; and two brothers-in-law, James O'Reilly of Newton and John O'Reilly of Farmington. John was predeceased by daughter Mary Kate Walsh, brother, Maurice Walsh and brothers-in-law Kerin Flannery and Harold Dunning.

John spent his professional career at Aetna Realty Investor, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Aetna Life and Casualty. His 32-year career spanned a number of senior positions involving real estate investments, the most recent of which required developing marketing innovative products to an international client base interested in the U.S. property market. As part of his job, John successfully established

relationships in Continental Europe, the United Kingdom, and Asia.

After retiring in 1991, John became even more involved in his faith and in service to others. A 17-year volunteer at St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church in downtown Hartford, and a member of the Staff there for 12 of those years, John contributed in significant ways to program development, the negotiation and acquisition of the Saints Parking Lot, and the development and construction of the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry as the Owner's Representative. John's financial skills and business acumen brought many benefits to the church. In addition, he cochaired the Visioning Committee, which sought to develop a five-year strategic plan for the church. John was made and Affiliate to the Province of The Holy Name of Jesus of the Order of Friars Minor in March 2000. This honor was the highest recognition bestowed on a non-Friar and was given in recognition of John's significant contributions to the Province and to the local Franciscan parish. John was passionate about helping people and dedicated a large part of his life to the service of others.

John was a co-founder of Agora-a forum created for the discussion and analysis of workplace ethics and economic justice-which provided a platform to openly discuss ethical issues in business, the profession, and academia. Agora had an impact on a broad audience for more than 17 years. For many years, he served as Chairman of the First Friday Club whose purpose was to identify the important connection between an individual's work life and spiritual life and to highlight how each affects and reinforces the other.

In addition, John was a member of The Working Connection, a small group of dedicated volunteers formed to provide job counseling and support services to the unemployed, including helping them develop networks, prepare resumes, and polish their interviewing skills. John was also a Corporator of the Hartford Seminary, a volunteer reader for the blind as part of a CRIS radio program, and the non-lawyer member of the local and statewide grievance panels that conduct hearings for

lawyers charged with misconduct or unethical behavior. John was awarded the Heart of Life Award in 2003 by St. Joseph College, and honor given annually to an individual who has made significant contributions to civic life.

John had a broad range of hobbies and interests. He was especially proud of having earned a second degree (nidan) black belt in Kokondo karate and continued to participate in karate until shortly before his death. He loved

the discipline and finesse of the martial arts and took great joy in having achieved the level of black belt. John was an avid motorcycle rider and member of the Harley Owners Group and was also an NRA instructor for many years. He traveled extensively to Mexico, Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Germany, France, Italy, Slovakia, Poland, Iceland, Austria, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Hawaii, Czech Republic, Israel, Egypt, and Jordan.

Mental Training in Kokondo

By Mr. Brian Watson (House of Kokondo,:Newington, CT)

There is a great deal of responsibility being a Kokondo-ka. We are held to a high standard by our higher ranking members and are expected to hold ourselves with the honor and dignity that are instilled through our training and through our valued seven codes of bushido. To keep this standard, we all work hard in the dojo, doing the best that we can, while getting a great workout in the process.

Asking one's self if working to your physical best is an adequate goal is a question all should always ask themselves. The answer to this ever important question should be no. When asking beginning students what their most powerful weapon is, their responses are based upon their physical strengths, i.e. fists, feet, elbows, etc. What most people usually seem to forget is



how powerful their mind is and thus is the most important weapon one could have. With this said, while we train our bodies in the dojo, we must remember to train our minds as well.

How do we train our minds while we workout? Well, hopefully you did well in elementary school because using your imagination is an important tool in developing your fighting mind. Whether your doing a throw from an attack in Jukido or you are doing a kata in Karate, we all know we are practicing self defense, but one should not just practice the motions but also imagine and visualize the situation that you are in. Are you in a dark ally or in the woods, what is the person wearing, how big is the person, what color is their hair, what is the smell in the air, what obstacles are around you that can help or hinder the self dense you use. This visualization will train your mind so if you are ever in a situation where your training is needed, your mind is ready for the different variables you may experience.



Another instance that your mind is trained in the dojo occurs during those really hard classes where you are pushed to and past your perceived physical limitations. Your mind must be used to overcome the fact that you are tired, that you are in pain, and that you are hot and just want to go home. When you are being attacked, you cannot stop to take a break because you are tired, you must keep fighting because your life may just depend on it. The practice of using your mind to ignore fatigue or pain will make you a better martial artist. It is also a great feeling to know you were able to surpass your preconceptions of your physical capabilities.

Finally, the mind is not just essential during a self-defense application, but before that situation even occurs. A Kokondo-ka does not go out looking to fight someone and hurt another person but only uses their training when there is no other alternative. This is why you use your brain to not be in bad areas of town or to remember safety if you have to be alone at home and to keep an idea of your surroundings at all times. When confronted verbally, your mind is there to help you talk your way out of physical altercations, to use your words to alleviate a potentially violent situation. The best way to win in a fight is to make sure it does not happen.

So with these points, the next time you enter your dojo for a night of training, make sure you are exercising the mental side of Kokondo and not just the physical. Visualize your self-defense and use your mind to overcome what you feel are your weaknesses. Remember your mind is your most important weapon before and in a self-defense situation. Think, work hard, and be safe.



Kokondo: Balance Equals Power

By Sensei George Rego, Jukido Academy – Palm Coast, Florida

Since the origin of martial arts there has always been a tendency to categorize the various methods of combat into particular categories. Some of the most commonly used descriptions are: hard styles vs. soft styles, striking styles vs. grappling styles, internal energy systems vs. external power systems, classical arts vs. modern arts, sport based systems vs. self-defense oriented systems, traditional systems vs. reality based systems.

Certain martial arts fit very neatly into these categories while other arts don't fit guite so neatly into one isolated classification. Despite this reality, many armchair martial artists, keyboard warriors, or those just generally uninformed about martial arts try very hard to force a "label" classification to each of the martial arts in a definitive concrete way. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with a "general" classification - most individuals who've watched an Aikido or Tai-Chi demonstration would probably have no problem saving that it is a relatively "softer" art when compared to some of the "harder" styles of karate such as Shotokan or Kyokushin. The point here is that although the general classification may fit – it's important that as students of Kokondo's jujitsu and karate arts we don't allow our system to be bottlenecked into an artificial category.

The umbrella system of Kokondo (Jukido Jujitsu & Kokondo Karate) finds itself in a particularly unique position relative to very specific classification often put on arts. Much of the already established Kokondo literature makes it clear that we are both a budo system and a bujutsu system. Meaning that from the physical perspective all of our techniques and practice are designed for real effectiveness (bujutsu). Conversely, we live our lives dedicated by a code of personal honor (budo).

However, let's view Kokondo from a different perspective. Are we a **traditional martial art** that focuses on preservation of classical training methods and techniques or are we a **reality-based system** (often referred to as "RBS") that focuses on self-defense as it actually is? If you

were to label Jukido Jujitsu or Kokondo Karate as either (a) traditional or (b) reality based self-defense – which would you choose?



Advocates of these two approaches to martial arts are often in bitter conflict. Internet

forums often explode in debate as to which approach is correct, best, etc. Proponents of Reality-Based Systems (RBS), such as Israel's Krav Maga often argue that traditional martial arts are flawed because they've come too far away from the classical roots of actual combat. Often the claim is made that traditional martial artists focus on the most minuscule details of a techniques that often won't work without decades of training. Such a nuanced approach is not practical for the down & dirty realties of selfdefense. The training of these techniques is always at the optimal distance from an exaggerated attack with a cooperative partner. Or worse, spending hours defending from an attack that doesn't really occur in selfdefense...nobody is going to attack you with a seiken chudan gyaku tsuki in a strong zenkutsudachi in real life. Real life is not karate sanbon kumite. A rapist or a child abductor isn't going to attack you with the running "chop" so common in Aikido demonstrations. Real attackers don't punch like karate-ka. Real assailants are going to swing round punches at full power from very close, grab your hair from behind and stab you, crank your neck, or put a gun to the back of your head.

In addition, way to much time is spent focusing on aspects of training that have "absolutely nothing" to do with the reality of self-defense in a street encounter – such as wearing funny uniforms, bowing, playing with old farm tools (weapons), an obsession with belt rank, and an emphasis on preserving outdated methods of training as opposed to opening the doors to

training that is more relevant for modern scenarios. Instead of spending so much time on this "other stuff" - more time should be spent studying real violence, action vs. reaction science, the physiological affects of adrenaline dump, and tactics for prevention and awareness in daily life (parking lots, airports, home protection). They make the case that spending time on this is much more useful then wasting training time working on the tiniest nuance of a particular pivot on some obscure 150 year old karate kata for hours at a time that isn't likely to help you during car jacking or help your daughter if faced in a violent rape situation after a party. Reality-Based advocates who advise traditionalists to stop playing "samurai warrior" a few nights a week and actually work on selfdefense, as it exists in reality.

On the other side of the debate is the traditionalist – those who study arts that may be relatively modern (Aikido, Judo, Japanese karate styles) in their founding but are the offspring of classical combat systems that were utilized in the fields of war for centuries. Traditionalists make the claim that Reality Based Systems are often flawed in their approach due to emphasizing a "nitty-gritty" approach to self-defense. The claim is often made that there is no way to turn someone into a proficient martial artist or self-defense expert with only a few "dirty tricks."

Also, many reality-based systems often braq about teaching self-defense in short durations of time. Traditionalists suggest that this is dangerous as it leads to students having a false sense of confidence – it leads these students to believe that they can defend themselves when in reality they haven't taken the significant time necessary time to convert the knowledge contained within their brain into actual skills that become a part of their muscle memory (i.e. instinctive reaction, second nature reflex, mushin). Essentially, they may have some degree of academic knowledge of violence or technique – but not the physical capability to utilize it. This only comes after thousands of hours of training and repetition – no different then learning to play an instrument, drive a car, or learn a language. In order for it to become natural and instinctive – it takes time and lots of practice, period. If one takes the time to make the techniques a part of them – it is much more

likely to be effective in a serious encounter where thinking can get you killed.

Additionally, the "nitty-gritty" "down and dirty" approaches to combat neglect to acknowledge that there might be someone who is bigger, meaner, stronger, and dirtier then you. This approach won't work as you become older and move away from your physical prime. Whereas traditional martial arts may take many years to master – but theoretically, the longer the better - as it becomes even more ingrained in your mind & body. Of course, traditionalists also make the point that there is a reason the arts they practice are still around – because they work. These arts have a documented history that objectively proves their time-tested effectiveness in real combat. The traditionalist would remind students of Reality Based Systems: Don't kid yourselves – those studying Reality Based Systems are trying to reinvent the wheel. There is nothing truly new that isn't already contained in traditional methods...

That brings us to, well...us – **Kokondo**.

We take a traditional approach to training: bowing, wearing white pajamas, preservation of old patterns (kata) and training methods, and adhere to Japanese dojo etiquette. At the same time, we spent the overwhelming majority of our technical training time focusing on realistic attacks such as knife attacks, chokes, bear hugs, attacks in car, and other attacks that are inclose and personal. We pride ourselves on both "discovering authentic martial arts" and at the same time being "the realistic approach to self-defense." The bottom line is Kokondo is both a traditional martial arts system and a system that bases itself on the realities of violent attacks as they actually occur.

The IKA was established to preserve the integrity of its traditional martial arts **AS** self-defense systems! It wasn't established to preserve its karate and jujitsu arts as classical arts – and to hell with actual realities of combat as they exist these days! Kokondo also wasn't established to teach a collection of miscellaneous techniques of self-defense without the guiding principles & source knowledge that tradition provides. This is evidenced by the translation of the "Kokondo" itself – The way of the past & present. Shihan Arel's unique experiences in the world of

traditional martial arts coupled with his experiences in a variety of real-life combat scenarios (inside and outside of the military) lead him to not falsely or artificially categorize his system as adhering to one dogmatic approach. This unique balance is one of the primary sources of Kokondo's unique power and effectiveness as a system of authentic self-defense.

In thinking about this topic I had a conversation with Kaicho Howard. He agreed with my thoughts and added some really thought provoking points. In particular, the idea that Kokondo could be "suspect" from those who practice on either side of the "fence." Reality-Based Systems such as Krav Maga may look at us and think, "These guys are traditionalists playing in their paiamas and colored belts..." and traditionalists, such as purest Aikido-ka, may look at our training and think, "Here we go - they are simulating a street and they are attacking with bear hugs, ground attacks, knife attacks, and hostage situations...there go those reality based guys." Again, Shihan Arel didn't believe that there was a conflict between tradition and reality. They shouldn't be separated. There is a time for training for absolute maximum form in a technique (nuances) and a time for getting down to the nitty-gritty where techniques might be abbreviated or modified in real-time & highintensity self-defense practice (multiple attackers, KMT sessions, etc.). Both are equally necessary and important. *Training is incomplete* without both. Without a balance between the two - overall effectiveness suffers.

If we limit our thinking to the dogmatic approach usually taken within martial arts circles – we'll often get nowhere. So perhaps an example outside of martial arts (but related) can help illustrate the importance of both approaches. Let's examine the modern Armed Services of the United States.

Clearly, the ultimate objective of the U.S. armed services victory in combat, period. As such, **EVERY** aspect of training is designed and geared toward their ability to defeat the enemy in the ultimate life-and-death scenario...war. With this objective in mind, these warriors train with the modern weapons of war in highly realistic simulations that are designed to trigger all of the physiological and psychological

responses that will take place in war. These warriors don't have time to do anything that is simply over-nuanced "fluff."

However, in addition to training with the latest technology, weaponry, and tactics of war these warriors, from their first day in boot camp are made to follow a very strict set of guidelines of behavior and etiquette. From the way they tie their boots, make their bed in the morning, hold their firearm, stand at attention, or address a senior officer – there is an **EXACT** and proper way to do things (highly nuanced). What does standing at attention in particular way or making your bed in the morning the way you were ordered have ANYTHING to do with someone shooting at you in the field of war? In the most direct sense, it has nothing to do with it. However, *indirectly*, these things are enormously valuable and DO ultimately help the warrior. Everything is done to help the warrior for the ultimate objective - victory in combat. Nothing is waste. These "non-combat" procedures are designed to build the warrior. In fact, without these baseline items - he'll never learn the actual techniques and tactics of warfare. He has to have the discipline and spirit of a warrior. It is the tradition of the U.S. Armed Services. It isn't tradition for traditions sake. It isn't "fluff." If one where to train one person in the traditional US armed services method (including teaching him how to stand at attention, march correctly, or make their bed a certain way) vs. another who is taught only the actual techniques and mechanics of war – I would guess that any trained military professional would take their chances with the first serviceman. This person has been taught to be a disciplined warrior – not just how to pull a trigger. The solider might not be training in "classical" techniques of warfare instead he is training in **reality-based** weapons and tactics...but he is taught how to do so in a **traditional** manner. A time-tested approach that has been proven to build warriors that can perform in the modern realities of war.

Would not a modern US Marine say that he is a part of the same "tradition" as the first men who served when the Marine Corps was established in 1775? Of course he would! He is a part of the tradition! He follows that tradition. Does that mean he uses the same "classical" tactics used in old-warfare that might only be seen these days in a civil war reenactment? Of course not! His training has been updated. He trains for the

"present" realities of war while following in same traditions of the "past" generations of Marines. He might not be training in the "classical" combative program of the Marine Corps but he is surely training in the same tradition with the same traditional principles in place. Many generals today wouldn't use the classical tools or tactics used by legendary warriors Sun Tzu or Miyamoto Musashi...yet they still relay study the traditional texts, strategy, and principles laid out by these masters centuries ago...because the traditional principles, when updated to today's reality, still work. Tradition is timeless.

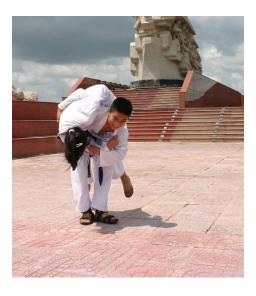
This example provides us with what Shihan Arel taught us...that the <u>most</u> traditional approach to martial arts ARE for reality based self-defense. Let's not forget what these arts were designed for. Real, practical, and effective combat! The real "tradition" of martial arts is to stay relevant and ahead of the enemy. We aren't training in *classical* martial arts – learning how to defend

from an armored samurai on horseback wielding a katana – that is a classical approach that no longer works today. However, we follow in that *tradition*. We use the combative principles and tactics and apply them for today's reality. Traditional martial arts aren't about sport or staying "locked" into a training regimen that would have had more success 200 years ago then in today's mean streets...or at least they shouldn't be.

Shihan Arel had it right...we don't have to choose one way or the other. It is a false choice. The traditional way is the best way for realistic self-defense...so long as we don't let the tradition die by not allowing it to move forward... Both hardcore traditionalists and modern "reality-based" practitioners make valid points. Rather then debating – let's make sure we keep the tradition of doing both. Balance equals power.

Just Your Other "Average" Trip By Kim Nguyen

Ugh, I finally get to stretch my wired up body after a very cramped ride on the plane. It had to be 16 hours at least, not that my muscles seemed to care. The usual hustle bustle of an after flight passed by in a blur as I waited to shed the coldness of the airconditioned airport to escape into the deliciously warm air. At last, I was finally able to shove the luggage cart through the receding glass doors. A wave of sight and sounds shocked me out my wits almost as hard as falling on my back in the dojo was. The wave of a hundred voices and blinding lights slammed into me like a tidal wave. Luckily, with a quick scan, I was able to spot my family members. Honestly, the only way I could figure out where my relatives were was by a big group of waving hands, beckoning and/or screaming for me to get myself over there. It's kind of hard to remember people you haven't seen since you were two. The hugs and kisses were passed (and some drops of, if not salty, H2O). After being promised that I would be able to go there, I was finally here. Where was I exactly? Well, Vietnam, of course.



Driving from Ho Chi Minh City to my grandparent's store in Long An was very interesting. First off, imagine driving in New York City. There are so many cars, right? Now, replace those cars with skinny motorcycles very compacted together. That was pretty much a normal sight to see in Vietnam's cities. Plus, all the people surprised me as well. All the hustle and bustle and people selling their wares. While on my trip, I also got to experience some Vietnam history as well as your average beaches and city trips. The pictures of my brother I doing some Karate and Jujitsu were taken at a park in Long An where my aunt and uncle live. It was very beautiful with water lilies, flowers, and especially its statues. The staircases leading up to the main statue gleamed in the sunlight. The park was in honor of a war and its soldiers. I was privileged enough to visit the mini museum there with my cousins. I saw the supplies that

the soldiers used: weathered, beaten guns, and more intriguing objects and pictures from the past. Even though the park is beautiful during the day, seeing it at night is incredible and magical. Different colored lights illuminate the park to make it seem as if some famous painter himself had splashed colors on it. Looking at it at a glance is enough to take your breath away. So, next time you just happen to be in my second home country, riding by in your motorcycle, drive by the place, but be sure to take it slow. You never know what might happen if you're awestruck.





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

Participation Fee -\$15.00 See your Sensei for the registration and waiver form! Must be returned to Sensei before Feb, 3rd 2012

1ST THROUGH 3rd PLACE AWARDED TROPHY OR MEDAL ALL PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE

Cash or Check made payable to IKA LLC





WAVIER & REGISTRATION FORM

INTERNATIONAL KOKONDO ASSOCIATION

2012 Jukido Jujitsu East Coast Regional Championship

Name: Height: Weight: Age: Belt Rank: Sensei: Dojo: Town:	
PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY!	
Registration must be given to Sensei by February 3RD	
REGISTRATION FEE: \$15.00 Make checks payable to: IKA LLC	
I understand that due to the nature of martial arts training, there is a RISK OF INJURY and that in the event of such injury, I shall NOT hold responsible the International Kokondo Association (IKA), IKA LLC, or the Gideon Welles School in Glastonbury, CT, the aforementioned officers, students, instructors, directors, or anyone connected to this Randori Tournament. Further, I understand and agree that I am obligated to certify and attest that I am in good health, AND hold myself responsible for not supplying a physician's confirmation of GOOD HEALTH. I further agree that IKA LLC may use any photos or images taken of me for commercial PURPOSES without compensation to me. I understand and agree to all the above.	
I am entitled to a copy of this waiver.	
DATE:	
Print Name of Participant:	
Signatura	

(If Registrant is a minor, Parent/Guardian Signature)

Martial Arts Discipline in a Modern World

By Sensei Charles Martin - St. Louis Kokondo

Used with permission from the St. Louis Kokondo Blog



Every once in a while I have someone come in wishing to teach them or their children so they can "learn discipline". Most

of the time, they leave with another martial arts myth removed from their database.

I say this because things aren't done the way they are viewed in the movies. We don't exist in a feudal society with perpetual civil wars that require constant training in armed and unarmed forms of combat. We aren't in a situation that requires us to train hour upon hour, day upon day, in order to defend our daimyo's lands from the army of the warlord on the other side of the mountain. Even for those of us that train for personal defense, it very simply is not the same world.

There was a whole different meaning to the word "discipline" in those days. Quite simply, you trained as hard as you could as best you could as much as you could because to do less would result in your death on the battlefield. It was your side against the other side with archers, spearmen, swordsmen and later, riflemen. Just like today's wars, there's a whole lot more going on than what we will ever encounter walking to our car after work. Don't get me wrong! An attack on the street is every bit as dangerous and the situations just as deadly. The difference is, though, that this is the anomaly. We need to be aware but in all likelihood, if we are very fortunate, we will never put our skills to use in a life-and-death situation.

Let's time warp forward a few centuries, now. It's the early 1900's and we're observing a "traditional" martial arts class in Japan. The head instructor enters the front door along with a number of his senior students. Those on the training floor stop what they are doing and, on command, bow to the instructor. As the instructor goes by a junior student asks him if he is having a nice day. The instructor only marginally acknowledges the greeting but as he passes, one of the seniors knocks the student to

the ground with a brutal punch. The crime? The student is not supposed to address the instructor at all, much less in such informal terms.

Now I have to ask you: Is this the kind of treatment you'd expect to have your children subjected to in a class setting?

Let me answer for you: No! This is the kind of thing over which cheesy personal injury lawyers salivate. It isn't the kind of behavior we tolerate in today's society.

And saying it's teaching discipline is a lie. It's abusive behavior.

So am I saying we're supposed to reduce our martial arts training to giggly pillow fights? Nobody gets bruised, we don't keep score and everybody goes home a winner? Absolutely not! We train hard in our dojo. We smack each other around with solid, but controlled, strikes and kicks. We throw each other to the ground but we control our partner's descent so that they can land properly. We leave sore, sweaty and sometimes with fresh bruises. The difference is that we acknowledge to each other – and ourselves – that we're going to subject ourselves to a couple hours of this a few days a week. We not only know it is coming, we expect it. We can even go so far as to say we look forward to it.

Our "discipline" doesn't come from the physical activity..... at least not directly. It comes from showing up every class knowing what's in store for us. It comes from showing up on days we really would like to just go home and have a cold one instead. It comes from showing up when we're already tired, when we're irritated from a lousy day at work, when we have to go from the car to the dojo in the rain and so on.

Our discipline comes from practicing the same kihon for incalculable repetitions because we know we can still do it better. It comes from knowing we're going to practice our new kata over and over and over to the point where we can do it in our sleep. It comes from knowing that once we now know the directions to turn and the techniques to execute we will spend the

rest of our lives learning and practicing the applications of the techniques in that form. It comes from knowing we're never done and that once we "get" a kata, our reward is to begin learning a new one and the process begins anew. Nothing is ever completed. Constant review and refinement is expected. And through all of this, we do it because we know it's what's necessary, not because we'll get beaten otherwise.

Can we learn discipline from martial arts in today's world? Sure. The trick is that we become our own teacher, and quite often, we find it was there all the time. For those that leave because it's too hard or too far or too (fill in the blank) it likely would never come, regardless of efforts of the instructors.

This article is written with one of my students particularly in mind. He leaves in a few weeks to begin serving our country in the military. For several years he has made a monumental effort to get to and from class. His trip covers roughly two hours on mass transit and a two-mile walk from the station to the dojo. The same trip is necessary to get home. He has come to class in our ridiculously hot, humid summers, in subfreezing winter weather, in show, in rain and whatever else nature has thrown at him. No complaints (not many, anyway) or excuses. He gets there and he works hard.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is discipline.

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-Sensei Charles Martin (yodan)

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

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