



MO ICHI DO

IOGKF-USA NEWSLETTER

July 2006

IOGKF-USA

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BUDO...DO WE PRACTICE IT?

The Japanese word "budo" consists of two characters: The original components of the character "bu" have the meaning "to stop clashing weapons" with a definite connotation of restoring peace. It can also be interpreted as "Courageous Living" and "Commitment to Justice". Do is Tao, "The way to Truth". The two concepts merge as Budo.

This is from John Stevens' book "Budo Secrets." Stevens has written, among other books, "The Sword of no Sword", a book that you really have to read. It is about the Zen, sword and calligraphy master Yamaoka Tesshu. He was one of the most interesting and inspiring characters of 19th century Japan. (Those of you who, like me, share the insane love of Zen practice and have gone to practice Zen in Okinawa with Sakiyama Roshi, will have noticed a photo of a bearded Japanese man at the entrance to the zendojo. That bearded man is Yamaoka Tesshu)

"Budo Secrets" is a small book offering a short read. It is full of quotes, samples of precepts of the various martial arts schools, and wonderful samples of Japanese calligraphy. The beauty of this book is that it sheds light on the purpose of Budo as well as the practice. Not unlike another must-read book, "The Way of the Warrior" this book brings to life the philosophy of real martial art masters with no prejudice towards one specific discipline. In "Budo Secrets" the focus is on Japanese masters and Japanese disciplines.

Respect, integrity, constant practice and a desire to find harmony and peace both within and around us; these themes are repeated in one form or another in each of the precepts and the philosophies of the martial arts. So the questions that beg to be asked are:

1. Are we teaching this?
2. Is it absolutely clear to us and to our students how to respond to conflict without resorting to violence?
3. Are we providing our students with tools they can use to resolve conflict peacefully?
4. Are we really practicing Budo?

**JR BLACK BELT –
THE NEXT STEP or
What happens with kids
who get their jr. black
belt and how to
motivate them**

Some of us have had Jr. Black Belts for a long time and there is a great deal of experience that has been accumulated since IOGKF-USA has created the current Jr. Black Belt Program. The problem many people seem to have is answering this question: What's next?

Well, I have been working on answering this and other question relating to this. Two things I have learned:

1. If you are a normal kid (or adult for that matter) you have to have something to look forward to or why in the world would you continue.
2. It is easy to motivate kids who have excelled if you have the proper tools in place. And..
3. The program needs to be modified.

So I will begin with number 3 because you have to begin with the end in mind. Here is what I have come up with for my dojo: I have had my instructors work on this for over a year and I have given it hours of thought and of course received approval from Sensei Higaonna.

The ranks for Jr. Black Belt will be one-year

apart instead of two years apart. This makes the goal of the next level much more real and achievable and it creates a bit of a sense of urgency.

..yes, I got my black belt but I only have a year to prepare for the next level, and I better make sure my butt is in the dojo. Now, every three months the Black Belts need to pass a progress evaluation. They need to show consistent and regular attendance, they need to know everything they knew to get their black belt and more (kata Senseru, applications, more basic sparring combinations, Chinese, Japanese, the complete works of Shakespeare, you name it). So every three months they have to test and they need to receive a stripe indicating that they did pass. Now, in one year they earn a total of 4 of these evaluations. They need to be in class to learn the material and we **HAVE TO TEACH IT TO THEM!** (Sorry I didn't mean to shout). By the way, this can and should be applied to all black belts if you want to keep them in the dojo. I plan to apply this to all black belts come this fall. Now...6 weeks prior to the BB test all candidates **MUST** be in class 4 days a week for a total of 24 classes back to back. (call it a kind of boot camp, hell month, final countdown the road to success...)

So the belts need to reflect this so we added a few stripes and reconfigured the names:
FOUR levels of kakkyu, 1-4 as follows:
Same belt (Black Belt with a while stripe running through it.)

KK1, age 10:
Three gold stripes,
KK2, age 11:
Two gold stripes,
KK3, age 12
One gold stripe,
KK4, age 13
No gold stripe,

Then four levels of Jokkyu 1-4 as follows:

Solid BB:

JK1, age 14, four gold stripes
JK2, age 15, three gold stripes
JK3, age 16, two gold stripes
JK4, age 17, one gold stripe

Confused enough?

Good.

I was explaining to another IOGKF-USA instructor and his first question was: So do you charge them the same testing fee? Well, do whatever fits your school needs.

Then, make sure you have a leadership class for the young black belts you want to end up as your assistants. Meet with them regularly, but not too often and teach them the skills they need.

I hope that everyone is conducting mock black belt exams. This is the key to having successful black belt exams and it is a lot easier to let someone know that they did not pass a mock test, like a pretend test, as opposed to failing someone on their black belt..now I think we are all in agreement that a student failing is a reflection on the instructor. So be sure you do a good job and then let the students succeed.



Notes From The Chief Instructor – Sensei Miko

Being a black belt is a terrific achievement. Being a karate instructor is a wonderful occupation. Running a dojo is a terrific thing too. But none of the above necessarily leads to the other. Being a Black Belt does not mean you can or even should teach karate. In fact many Black Belts that I know should not be allowed to come near a student. Not that they are mean or stupid, they just do not understand what an enormous responsibility it is to teach, and how much damage can be done if it is not done correctly. Now just because someone is a talented teacher it does not mean that they can run a dojo properly or successfully. Once again, I know some outstanding instructors who should never be allowed to run a dojo or they will surely run it to the ground. Sad? Maybe, but its true! And the sooner we realize this the better. **WE ALL NEED HELP!** The more help we get the better we become.

I can't stand bookkeeping! Nothing in the world could possibly make me a good bookkeeper. But I realize it is a crucial part of running a business and so I looked (and found) for the absolutely best and most trustworthy bookkeeper and CPA I can find and I pay them whatever they ask for so that I never have to worry about it. I decided that I was going to run a dojo. But I never went to business school, so

I looked for the best business consultants I could find (some of you know this already), I paid them tons and tons of money (I still am paying them tons of money – wanna know how much? See if you can guess) but guess what? I am running a great business and I am only scratching the surface.

So I love karate, I mean I love to stand in line and punch and kick...I do! I also love to teach. Give me your worse 5 year old that has ADDHD and can't sit still for more than 0.5 seconds at a time, just let me have him! I love it. And now that I can run a karate school, I mean really run it as a business and as a school (curriculum, testing syllabus, the works) I find that I love that as well. But I got LOTS OF HELP! And that help cost me tons. But here's the thing, all the tons of money I spent were, and now listen carefully, those \$\$ were **AN INVESTMENT**. I am on my way to Las Vegas now for the Martial Arts Supershow. I am paying for my two instructors to come with me and I know that this investment will pay off. (I really hate Vegas but that's beside the point).

I happen to think teaching karate is the **ONLY** way to understand karate. It is probably true for other skills and arts..once you teach it you get it and if you don't teach you never quite get it.. If you choose to teach then take it seriously, study everything you can about teaching, about kids about adults, take every leadership and personal development course possible to make sure that you are the kind of person that people will want learn from you. (Isn't there a saying that you should never listen to someone who is more screwed up than you..)Be sure that you are at the top, that you are the best teacher your students can possibly find. Now, what happens to the best teachers? They often become the worst administrators...look

at almost any school district in the nation. People always rise to the level of their incompetence – don't let that happen to you! If you are going to run a karate school then be sure that you are competent and that you are maximizing the potential that exists within your school.

OK I have to face it. The EC and I PO'd a few of you with the new fee structure for IOGKF membership and even more with the fees for Gasshuku. This is no laughing matter, and I am sorry. But I am proud of our members because everyone stepped up to the challenge, instructors are paying their membership fees and the Black Belt Gasshuku will be sold out by the time you read this. Frankly, I never doubted this would be the outcome.

It feels great to know that Sensei Higaonna will finally be paid as he should be. I think that we will be able to afford to actually rent a venue (this will be a first) because there will be money left over after the expenses! I am just sorry that it was done in a way that upset a few people. So please excuse my abruptness.

So what you are charging and how much money is your dojo is making for you is your business, but we can't let our inability to ask for money get in the way. I really don't have time (or space) to get into this this time but feel free to e-mail me if you want to talk about this.

As always, I encourage everyone to call me any time you have a reason to do so, my direct number is (619) 990-9939, my dojo number is (619) 435-8223 and my e-mail address is: usaiogkfc@aol.com. Be warned I rarely answer my cell phone but I do check my messages. I respond to IOGKF related e-mails and phone calls on Fridays.

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Events for 2006/2007
**USA BLACK BELT GASSHUKU
WITH MASTER MORIO HIGAONNA**

October 2006 5-8

USA HONBU DOJO,
Coronado, California

IOGKF Chief Instructor Gasshuku

NOVEMBER 3-9, 2006

Okinawa

(Sandan and up welcome, with permission
from country Chief Instructor)

Winter/Spring 2007

SENSEI TERAUCHI USA TOUR

TBA

Summer New York Regional Gasshuku

TBA

USA BLACK BELT GASSHUKU

Fall, NASHVILL, TN

**IOGKF-USA GASSHUKU WITH
MASTER HIGAONNA**

Winter 2008

IOGKF-USA
212 Steeplechase Circle
Sanford FL 32771