



Illustration 1: Honbu Dojo in Okinawa

October 2016

Dedicated Readers of Kime,

Thank you to all the submissions made for this newsletter over the past months. Keep it up!! The more content we receive, the better the newsletter will be (and the more interesting).

If you have any ideas, content, articles, pictures, or anything you'd like to see in the newsletter, send your insights and comments to maja@anshindojo.com.

Thanksgiving

Anshin Dojo will be closed for Thanksgiving. We hope everyone has a safe and happy long weekend!

Dojo Closures

10th – Thanksgiving
31st - Halloween

Friendship Day this Month

Friendship Day this month will be held at Tilley's School of Karate, on Sunday, October 30th. Hope to see everyone there!!

Special Events

15th – Iaido at Stratford Martial Arts
29th – Iaido at Stratford Martial Arts
30th – Friendship Day at Tilley's School of Karate

Halloween

We at Anshin Dojo know everyone is super excited for this holiday! We will be closing the dojo for October 31st, to give everyone a chance to get their costumes together and make the most of this Monday night. Have a safe and Spooktacular Halloween!

Birthdays

5th – Phillip I.
9th – Fernando O.
10th – Sabrina B.

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Bullying: Karate's Unspoken Problem

By: Rick Evans

In the second of this two-part series, this article talks about the dangers of bullying from the perspective of Karate-ka Rick Evans and his thoughts on how cooperation and awareness can be powerful tools to eliminate bullying from the dojo.

BEST TRAINING METHODS

Are training methods an inherent part of karate or cultural wrappings? In no Olympic sport do top athletes train to-day as they did 100 years ago. Proponents of the old ways to train were left in the dust of the early adopters of proven changes. Among the lessons learned was that you cannot train well if you are injured. Some injuries can be so inhibiting that one can only train through visualization techniques. Minor injuries such as micro-tears from cold stretching are known to inhibit training effect. Even over-training where the capillaries are not given enough recovery time, this can hurt training and ultimate performance.

So why do we still have classes where the participants go home bruised like they've been beaten with a baseball bat? Could it be because some Not OK people like to dominate their training partners? Suck it up, or you're not a real karate-ka???

THE DOJO AS A CLASSROOM

Training methodologies have also changed in the last 100 years. After World War II, the techniques used by the armed forces were what was well known and copied. And the military's cultural norms were copied right along with them. No talking amongst the students, no matter they were on subject trying to help each other. No laughter or joking, no matter how beneficially they effect tiredness and focus and camaraderie. Definitely, no questioning a senior's direction. You have to be prepared to lay down your life when so directed. I have heard the argument that North American students aren't prepared to practice the same drill repeatedly the way Japanese students would. I'm not sure if this is true; I personally enjoy the opportunity to practice until I get it right or I'm too tired to practice it more this time. Whatever, is there only one way to learn real karate?

While there are all kinds of systems for teaching, almost all modern theories separate andragogy from pedagogy. In this essay, I speak to andragogy, the training of adults. Excellent training for adults has moved away from the conformist methodologies the military used over half a century

ago. A modern classroom can be chaotic, each student following their own interests as well as contributing as best they can. A successful class will have noise, students helping each other and laughing to keep spirits high.

'RESPECT' AS A CULTURAL HIDING PLACE FOR BULLIES

I believe Black Belts deserve respect. A black belt signifies that a person has been working hard enough, long enough and successfully enough to be welcome among other practitioners and acknowledged as a karate-ka. It is a significant achievement, not to be dismissed. It is such an admirable achievement so as to have people lie that they have done so. But a black belt of any level doesn't mean that person knows best for another person. One's achievement suggests a path that others might follow, but it doesn't guarantee that it is the best path for every other person.

Still, let's suppose that the hierarchy within a dojo is synched and very competent. How do they encourage better performance from their juniors? Would a bully even ask this question? Over time, there is a big difference between being told, "Well that sucks; let's work on that." and being told, "You suck; I just showed you that last time." There is a huge emotional difference between recognizing something that needs improvement that can be worked on together versus denigrating a person's performance and centering them out as the one who can't remember anything.

The bully, the Not OK person might enjoy putting the other down. Or the bully might simply have become trapped in a pattern of habitual behaviour. It doesn't matter; a put down is a put down. An OK teacher will enjoy building the student up. I believe the situation is much worse where the hierarchy within a dojo is not all on the same page in EVERY karate matter. It happens all the time.

(Bullying cont. on p4)

Matsubayashi - Becoming Rooted in Strength

By Alex DiMarco

Being strong and powerful is not to desire dominance and control but a search for freedom and generosity. The tree reflects our journey of strength - becoming rooted and reaching to the sky. Our roots are the values we entrench and store, nourishing our relationships, thoughts, memories and ideas. Our branches become extensions of our hopes and dreams reaching out and flourishing. Our core, strengthens, thickened with experience and action, holding us strong and upright. This strength of self banishes fear and uncertainty and fosters growth, providing shade, nourishment and safety to allow life to grow. This strength does not destroy but multiplies, creating a forest of giants, generations of growth that work to foster a safe environment of freedom and acceptance that stands strong yet adjusting to the winds of change. It is in forests such as these that joy and peace can flourish. In such safe and rich environments freedom abounds and creativity blossoms. This is within our choice and within our grasp if we wish to nourish it within ourselves and share it with others.

Sensei's Corner

While everyone else around you is losing their heads,

A martial artist keeps his cool and will become the guiding light out of the darkness.

There is a phrase in Japanese that conveys an important strategy in Okinawa Karate-do, "*Suemono ni shite utsu*". This phrase means to strike your opponent after forcing him into an awkward position.

When you force your opponent into an awkward position, it gives you several important advantages during a confrontation: (1) break your opponent's balance so that he cannot counter-attack, (2) increase your chances of striking him, (3) allow you to throw or grapple him. So, how can you get an opponent into an awkward position? Well lucky for us someone worked this out already in each respective Karate-do tradition, and is generally comprised of two components. The first is *tenshin* – turning / moving the body which teaches the mechanics of HOW to move, and the second part is *kata* which teaches the circumstances and principles of WHEN to move. To apply this concept then, it is just a matter of looking into both of them deeply and practicing them diligently.

Sensei's Rules of Living

#10.

Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.

If you go silent, that doesn't mean you are wrong. Sometimes it means you are strong. Sometimes it means you have the ability to understand and adjust with anyone at any situation.

Sometimes it means you are maintaining your self respect and dignity. Sometimes it means you are deeply hurt. Sometimes it means you are highly disappointed and fed up with what you got from life.

Sometimes it means you are done fighting for your rights. Sometimes it means you are better alone than having people around who do not have the heart to understand you, who don't give you respect and hurt you.

Sometimes, Silence looks an awful lot like freedom.

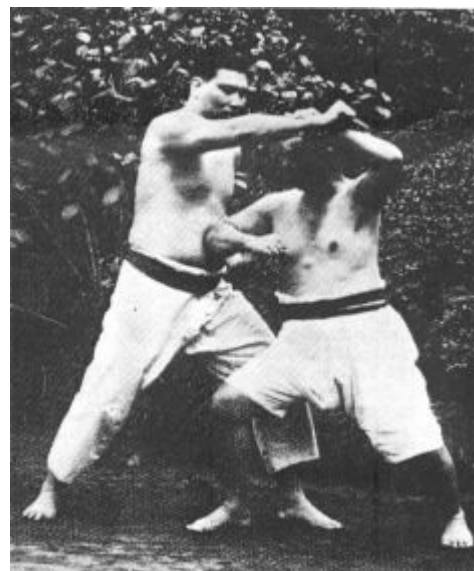


Illustration 2: Motobu Choki demonstrating the strategy of "Suemono"

Bullying - continued...

A junior thinks they have learned something from the teacher, but, at a later time, is told to do 'it' differently by a senior. What is the junior to do? Many dojos will insist on no talking, no oral interaction between the students at all. How is the junior being respected?

People pass gradings and advance in belt levels. Somehow people forget that no matter how high their belt level, they never did anything perfectly. They have never done anything perfectly. Yet a junior can't question them? Woe to the junior who tries to tell a senior, "That's not what Sensei showed me." Respect is taught to be in one direction only and the bully has a great time.

In my opinion, when a senior has this much authority, there is great opportunity for bullying. I think this is similar to a conflict of interest issue. For there to be a conflict of interest, the parties don't actually have to cheat, they just have to have the opportunity to cheat. In my opinion, just like it is bad to have a conflict of interest situation, it is bad to have no immediate recourse for juniors being led by seniors.

COMPETITION IS THE FERTILIZER FOR GROWING BULLIES

Does anyone want to be a loser? Competition creates many losers and one winner. On the other hand, co-operation mostly ends up with everyone winning and no losers. Competition distracts the practitioner from a true assessment of how they are improving, even that they are improving. Yet it is in recognizing that one can make efforts and one can improve despite one's limitations that one can truly accept that one is OK. Funakoshi wrote, "The ultimate aim of Karate lies not in victory or defeat, but in the perfection of character of its participants." Some have debunked his position, saying it's not the position of a real soldier or a real martial artist. It was said that Funakoshi's teachers, at one time guards of the King of Okinawa, couldn't possibly have been less interested in winning than being of good character. I find that implausible. A soldier knows that he/she can die no matter how good a warrior they are. However, how can a soldier take pride in life without being of good character? How can anybody?

FURTHER THOUGHTS

A lot of writing deals with proper respect.

What is the proper respect for juniors? Are their questions not important to them? Do they not know their strengths and limitations better than anyone else?

If respect is a one-way street, where are the safeguards from bullying?

If you pair up students to practice something and one feels the partner is taking advantage some way such as too forceful contact, how do you ask the student to react?

Do you create an environment supportive of bullying? Do you create an environment that could lead to assault charges? Fifty or sixty years ago it was normal for school teachers to tell children to settle their own problems. The bullied were encouraged to face their bullies, inevitably leading to a fight where, hopefully, the bullied child "got in a few good ones", enough to stop further bullying. Exactly the same behaviour could be found in dojos. To-day, no school teacher better dare give such advice. It is no different in the dojo. The senior who suggests that a bullied student just hit back a little harder has just promoted assault. Woe on the senior who sees his or her advice result in an escalation where someone is injured!

In your class, are smaller students second-class citizens? Are students with physical problems second-class citizens? Do you tend to all with the same care and attention and positive reinforcement? When students grade, are they judged to an absolute standard? Or are they judged on the basis of their effort and performance compared to their personal limitations?

Are you a bully? Do you honestly feel OK about yourself? Do you spend more time cheering on improvements in your students or finding fault? Is your dojo a place of co-operation? Is your dojo a place of respect for seniors and juniors alike? Are partners treasured? Is your dojo free of bullying?

And if you come upon bullying, how do handle it? Belittlement? A tirade? Some one-on-one instruction with heavy contact?

In modern teaching there is a saying that if the student hasn't learned then the teacher hasn't taught. Yet what about the other side of the coin? What are your students learning from you?