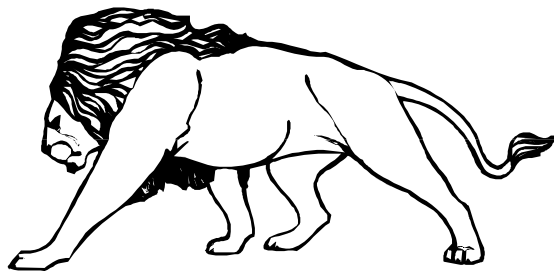
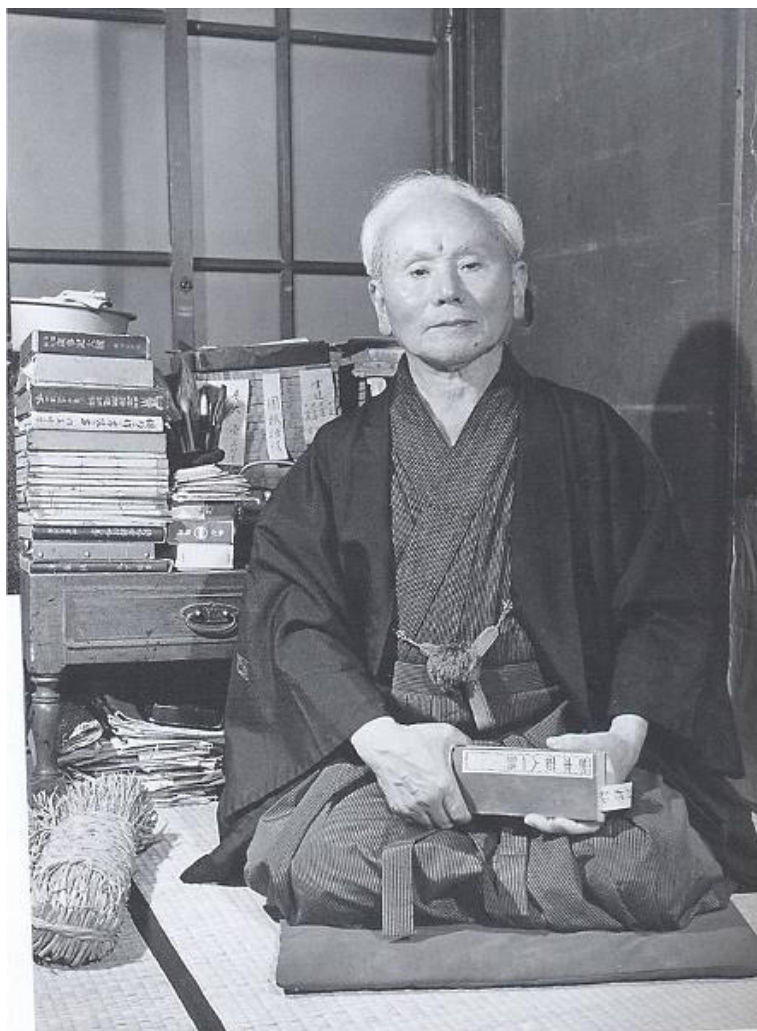


The Lion



*The official newsletter of the Chiltern Karate
Association – June 2015*



fore Word....

Welcome to the bumper June edition of The Lion, your forum for **all things karate...**

Firstly a massive thanks to this **quarter's contributors for typing up** some very impressive (in both content and length!) and thoroughly informative articles. It has been great putting together and editing this edition of your newsletter and I **hope that I'll continue to see a** steady trickle of interesting articles, images and thoughts, especially from junior grades, for inclusion in future issues.

This **month's** front cover features the one and only Sensei Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of Shotokan Karate-Do (pictured here with a book collection Senseis Croft and Davenport would no doubt be proud of).

Hopefully everyone has trained hard in both technique and spirit for this June grading. Remember to give it 100 percent even if by some miracle summer has kicked in and

the dojo has transformed into an oven. The discomfort will be fleeting but your achievement will last a lifetime.

Hajime 始め

Jack Hamilton

4th Kyu

If you have any material that you would like to be considered for publication in The Lion please contact Sensei Thwaites at erin.thwaites@yahoo.co.uk.

We are also looking for new content to add to our website, Facebook group, Twitter and YouTube. If you have any ideas we will be glad to hear from you, email info@chilternkarate.co.uk

Material published may not necessarily represent the views of the editor, the club instructors or CKA committee.

The Dan-tastic Duo!

No kata-strophes here as Kerry Clough and Michael Thornton attained Shodan and Sandan respectively during the March grading session. Congratulations to both!



A battered and bruised (but still smiling) Mr Clough receives his hard won black belt from Sensei Croft after attaining Shodan (1st Dan).

After being put through his paces Mr Thornton reaches Sandan (3rd Dan) and is congratulated by Sensei Croft.



The two triumphant karate-kas. Read on for Mr Clough's top tips for training towards Shodan...

Shodan - Yes You Can

For any of you aspiring to earn your black belt let me tell you straight away that you can do it and you must believe you can do it.

No matter what doubts you have about your ability, fitness, quality of your karate techniques, how you will cope under pressure or even if you are simply full of self-doubt, please do not let these thoughts stop you from giving it a go.

Remember, you will have been invited to grade for your black belt, which means that your peers believe that you can achieve it - they would not simply invite you to fail.

I'd like to share with you what worked for me in overcoming all of my doubts. If they strike a chord with you then great - if they don't then find your own way of overcoming these uncertainties and you will be amazed by what you can achieve, if you work hard enough.

Breathe deeply during every technique. This is obvious, I know, but most of us don't do it! I cannot stress enough that you must do this throughout your grading. We all have a tendency to hold our breath when we are trying extra hard in kata or kumite or doing our basic techniques, but if you do this in your grading you will very quickly run out of steam and both your speed and quality of technique will suffer. Promise yourself that in all of your lessons you will focus on taking deep breaths at every opportunity. Even if you don't feel tired still take deep breaths as much as you can and believe me you will surprise yourself at the difference this makes.

Become as fit as you can. The black belt grading can last up to 1.5 hours so you need to have the stamina to last that long. In addition to doing karate lessons twice a week I also ran up to 5 miles twice a week and practiced stretching at home several times a week to get my muscles to be as flexible as possible. I was doing this for 6 months before my grading so I knew that when I graded I was in the best condition I could be in. In addition and I'm not suggesting everyone do this, I tried extra hard to become more flexible by taking up yoga which I did twice a week for a year. The difference it made to me was huge. I know not everyone has the time to do all of these things but the message is that whatever pressures

you have on your time, you need to build in the time to become as fit as you can. Going to karate twice a week and doing nothing else is in my opinion not enough to get you through your black belt grading.

Practice, practice, practice. You have to practice enough to know your syllabus back to front so that you can perform it under pressure to the best of your ability. In addition to your twice a week karate lessons you need to practice at home, even if you don't have someone to practice with. Run through all of your basic techniques, kumite sets and katas so many times that you can do them without thinking and then do them again and again and again. Even when I wasn't doing karate and I had some spare time I ran through all of my kumite sets and katas in my mind to make sure I really did know them. When I got to this point it gave me a lot of confidence that under pressure I knew I could perform without having to think too much about what would be my next move in either the kumite sets or katas.

Expect the unexpected. You need to know your syllabus but what order you do it in on the day is entirely up to Sensei, so be prepared for literally anything. You might start the grading by doing kata and then some basics and then back to kata and then some kumite, who knows. If you are prepared for this, you've trained hard enough and your fitness is good then you will not be surprised and you will be able to cope.

Do your absolute best. By this I mean do not compare yourself to anyone else. Only focus on what you can do and do everything to the best of **YOUR** ability. So at all times from the time you walk into the dojo to start the grading to the time it finishes do everything as well as you can. Make every Yoi, every Rei (bow), every movement you do be the best you can do. Start as strong and as fast as you can. Make sure every technique is the best you can do and keep doing this throughout your grading so that when you get to the end you know that you have done your best. Only you know what your best is and if you have genuinely done your best and you can do no more then you can be happy. Sensei will see this. Sensei will also see if you are taking things easy and pacing yourself - don't do this.

Know your techniques in Japanese. Sensei will ask you to perform certain moves and will use the Japanese terms for these moves so if you don't know

your Japanese words you won't be able to do the correct moves. I personally found this very difficult and when I was getting tired in the grading my mind went blank. This was because I did not practice remembering the Japanese terms enough. Don't make the mistake I did. Give yourself plenty of time to do this.

Don't worry - you will make mistakes. We all make mistakes, we are human. You will make mistakes in the grading. You will forget some things, particularly when you feel tired, no matter how much you train and practice. This is normal. The most important thing to do if this happens is to keep going. Do not stop or huff and puff or curse yourself loudly if you do make a mistake, such as forgetting what block you should do in a kumite set or kata - **KEEP GOING**.

Read 'Karate-do My Way of Life' by Master Gichin Funakoshi. It's only 126 pages and can be bought on eBay for £3 (that's what I paid). It's full of information on the history of Karate and how karate has evolved from its earliest beginnings in Okinawa to the martial art practiced world-wide today. You will be asked a few questions by Sensei about the history of Karate and/or the thoughts of Gichin Funakoshi.

Learn about pressure points and how they should be attacked. Buy Sensei Ashley Croft's book on this or go online to read about it. You need to know the basics and to be able to show Sensei some pressure points on the arms, legs, torso and head - how they should be struck and at what angle.

Whatever ways you use to prepare for your Shodan grading make sure you give yourself enough time and promise yourself you will become the best that you can be. If you do that you will be successful and believe me the sense of satisfaction you will feel on achieving your black belt will make you feel on top of the world.

Kerry Clough

Shodan (1st Dan)



Special Holmer Green Dojo 10th Anniversary Course & BBQ

What? A special course hosted by Sensei Davenport focusing on the application of Bassai Dai.

The course will be followed by a celebratory BBQ which all students are welcome to attend.

When? Sunday, 5th July 2015: 12.00 pm - 1.30 pm

Where? Training - Holmer Green Senior School (Dance Studio), Parish Piece, HP15 6SP

BBQ - Sensei Davenport's house at 12 The Lawns, Penn, HP10 8BH

Cost? £8.00 for adults and £6.00 for children (half price for those only wishing to train/eat)

Interested? Get in touch with Sensei Davenport on 07753 761778 or speak to your dojo Sensei to confirm your attendance

(P.S. We are reliably informed that Sensei Davenport will have his makiwara up for those who would like a go!)



The Twenty Precepts of DD – “Shotokan Renkinjutsu”?

Part 1

Gichin Funakoshi first published his Niju Kun in 1938 as a set of twenty principles - essentially an aid to guide students towards the spiritual side of karate-do.

Just after the end of WW2, the senior JKA instructors (presumably led by Nakayama & Nishiyama, around the time the JKA was formed in 1949) took the Niju Kun and devised the 5 precepts of the Dojo Kun that we use today. The Dojo Kun is very much a “Shotokan” invention but variations also occur in some other styles in context & in length.

The Niju Kun has various English translations but here are the 20 precepts as laid down by Gichin Funakoshi:-

- 1. Never forget: karate begins with rei and ends with rei (Rei means courtesy or respect, and is represented in karate by bowing)**
- 2. There is no first attack in karate**
- 3. Karate supports righteousness**
- 4. First understand yourself, then understand others**
- 5. The art of developing the mind is more important than the art of applying technique**

6. The mind needs to be freed

7. Trouble is born of negligence

8. Do not think karate belongs only in the dojo

9. Karate training requires a lifetime

10. Transform everything into karate; therein lies its exquisiteness

11. Genuine karate is like hot water; it cools down if you do not keep on heating it

12. Do not think of winning; you must think of not losing

13. Transform yourself according to the opponent

14. The outcome of the fight depends on one's control

15. Imagine one's arms and legs as swords

16. Once you leave the shelter of home, there are a million enemies

17. Postures are for the beginner; later they are natural positions

18. Do the kata correctly; the real fight is a different matter

19. Do not forget control of the dynamics of power, the elasticity of the body and the speed of the technique

20. Always be good at the application of everything that you have learned.

In his honour, I've set out my own personal beliefs based around how I believe we should approach our training, some of which mirror the original Niju Kun and some that don't. If my opinions need a name which summarises & clarifies, then "Shotokan Renkinjutsu" would seem to be appropriate...

1. Always know when a fight has started

The Crown Prosecution Service is very clear with regards a "pre-emptive" strike - there is no rule in law to say that a person must wait to be struck first before they may defend themselves, (see R v Deana, 2 Cr App R 75). If you have an honest & upheld belief that you are about to be attacked, or that you are in grave danger, then you should (nay must!) strike first. The principle of Karate Ni Sente Nashi (there is no first strike in karate) still holds true as long as you understand when you are in combat...and when you are not

2. You don't have to win every fight, just don't lose

If you can, always walk away from combat as the avoidance of a physical encounter should always be the prime objective. If you let ego or pride overrule your better judgement, then you are heading for a fall. Better to walk away and lose face than risk losing something much worse. That loss can be physical (i.e. you could die) but could also be a loss of your livelihood or even a loss of your liberty. If you have no other option but to start combat, there will always be the risk you will lose. Saru mo ki kara ochiru...even monkeys fall out of trees!

3. Just when you think you've cracked it, karate will punch back

Ah, training! Every now and again I experience that feeling of everything coming together, as if you really feel like you are getting somewhere with your technique...and then it all falls apart faster than a sandcastle in front of an

oncoming tide! Loss of form, an injury, self-doubt, external life pressures all have a bearing on your training. As in life, you will have ups and downs but to battle though will make you mentally tougher. The Japanese have a saying for this - ame futte ji katamaru which literally means “after the rain, earth hardens” i.e. out of adversity we build a stronger character

4. It is possible to train every day

You just have to understand what it means to train. Very few people have the time (or the energy!) to train for hours every day, but that does not preclude you from doing something. In the morning, when the kettle is boiling, do a few fingertip press ups in your kitchen. On the train, run through a kata application between two stops, and then go back to your newspaper. When you get home from work and you're getting changed, spend 5 minutes on sit ups. While you are watching Corrie, spend the adverts holding a stretch. You don't have to turn into a walking copy of Karate Do Kyohan to make a small difference but that small difference, every day, will show dividends when you actually step into the dojo. And when your body gets to that point we all dread (knees gone, back in pieces, bits fallen off...) when it is physically impossible to smash your way through a 2 hour session, hopefully the habit of “training” every day will allow you to carry on with your journey in a different way

5. Not everyone will be Jackie Chan

We are all different. We are all beautiful people (most of us!) with individual qualities that make us unique. But I am not convinced that means we can all be black belts. The question that needs answering is...what makes a black belt? Is it just technical ability? What about the man whose left knee is damaged and cannot kick on one side? Or the woman with arthritic hips who cannot kick above the knee? Or the child with autism? Should they all be judged solely on the way

their bodies perform mechanical actions? There is no exact answer as this is up to the individuals that set the rules but I do know that it feels wrong to award ever higher grades to ALL students who are past their natural ability threshold, just because they are nice people and always turn up for each lesson. The sooner you know your limitations, the quicker you can get on and enjoy the journey. Each person's individual struggle should be rewarded accordingly as they progress but that progression cannot be universal. And I also know that if you ever get to the stage where you are not that concerned about your next grading...you will train for the rest of your life

6. Relax - the more you try, the worse the technique

From the first lesson you are taught to tense as part of Kime - fundamentally this is incorrect as Kime has zero to do with tension. We should be teaching relaxation as the path to power, grace & technique. The misguided view of Kime and the lack of understanding Sun-dome has bred a multitude of bad habits for generations of karate-ka. If you are tense during Kime you will never achieve Kime. Tension restricts brain function & muscle movement. For example, look at how you punch - if you are tense BEFORE you start the punch, you will react slower, if you are tense DURING the punch, you will restrict your acceleration towards the target and if you tense prematurely at the END of the punch, you will dramatically reduce the terminal force applied. There are only two reasons to be tense when punching - immediately AFTER you hit something (in order to prevent self-harm) or just BEFORE you hit something (in order to arrest the technique short of the target i.e. sun-dome). And in the case of sun-dome, as soon as the technique has been arrested...don't forget to RELAX straight after!

7. Speed is everything

Force = Mass multiplied by Acceleration. Fact. We mere mortals have yet to harness the power of Ki and thus have to rely on physics. Unless you can add more mass (strapping a horseshoe to your fist, eating copious amounts of pies etc), you need to concentrate on applying the mass you have. And that means maximising the impact velocity. Think about a bullet...throw it at a door and it will bounce off but place it in the chamber of a gun and it will fly straight through...the only difference is SPEED. The only two things that matter when striking are a) the skill of utilising body mechanics to ensure your whole body mass is harnessed during a technique and b) your muscles ability to project your body mass towards the target in the fastest way possible. Get it right and you too could execute gyaku tsuki like Enoda - "...when he punched it was like someone closing a bank vault door..."

8. There is no such thing as "punching harder"

You cannot punch harder. You can expel more effort in trying to move your limbs faster; you can grit your teeth and continue to perform at the same intensity demanded by your Sensei, even though your muscles are screaming at you; you can concentrate on relaxing your muscles during the process of punching so that you maximise your impact velocity and hence your force; you can look at how you are moving in relation to your body mechanics; you can understand why you are not using your whole body mass; you can explore what subtle changes you have to make to your technique; you can work on eradicating any erroneous movements that are detracting from your technique. But you cannot just "punch harder"

9. And there is no such thing as “more kime”

When you do a technique, you will either achieve Kime or you will not. There are not levels of Kime. It is either achieved or it is not. Kime is the point of maximum force at the moment of impact - as defined by Nakayama. Kime is a point in time, a moment when the body, mind and spirit come together as one in perfect harmony. My punch will be at it most powerful at the exact moment before I start to apply the brakes. Don't forget that the rapid tensing of the muscles after Kime is called Sun-dome. Sun-dome means to arrest a technique just before contact with the target (Best Karate Vol 1 1978, Nakayama). A technique that has no kime can be when the heel of the foot rises off the floor, or when the hips don't snap into place at the right time during punch. A technique with no kime is when you are off balance. A technique with no kime is when your back is not straight as you stand in zenkutsu dachi. A technique with no kime is when the retracting hand is weak, when the punching hand over-extends, when the shoulders are too tight, when the course of the punch is not straight, when the fist shakes or wobbles. And on, and on...and on. The quest for the “perfect” technique, Kime, is a never ending process

10. If you don't hit things, you will never do karate

A generation of post war karate masters came to reconcile & teach kime with sun-dome without resorting to makiwara training. You establish the target slightly in front of the opponent's vital point. Thus it can be hit with kime and sun-dome. If you didn't apply muscle tension at the end of a punch your arm would just swing through the air. And if you hit something solid and don't tense at the point of impact, you will seriously damage yourself! Best case you will sprain your wrist but the shock of the impact will also be felt in the other connecting joints (elbow, shoulder etc) as well as the supporting muscle structures (back, neck etc). Plus

there is Newton's 3rd Law of Motion which states "every action has an equal and opposite reaction". As you hit something solid, the force of the impact is sent back into your body. If your technique has been anything less than perfect (i.e. without kime) then this opposite reaction will amplify your weak technique.....have you ever bounced off a punch bag? When you punch thin air, the same muscle tension seems to be deployed but it is different. Sun-dome arrests the technique in mid-air but cannot substitute the effect of forces applied to the body as a result of an impact. Without hitting something solid you will never know if you are applying or experiencing kime - "...Impact cannot be really developed by punching thin air, and kime is only truly experienced when the fist actually hits something..."

TO BE CONTINUED...

David Davenport

Yondan (5th Dan)

Interesting? Want to read more of Sensei Davenport's fascinating insight? (I certainly do!) Then tune in for the second and final instalment of *'The Twenty Precepts of DD'* in September's issue of *The Lion*.

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Calendar 2015

<p>Sunday 28th June – Grading training <i>Class will be divided into groups and training focused on the grading syllabus including the kihon (basics) kumite (sparring) and kata required for grading examinations.</i></p> <p>Venue: Chiltern Hills Academy, Chartridge Lane, Chesham. Time: 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Grades: All grades Cost: Adults: £8.00 Juniors: £6.00</p>	<p>Sunday 19th July – Grading training <i>Class will be divided into groups and training focused on the grading syllabus including the kihon (basics) kumite (sparring) and kata required for grading examinations.</i></p> <p>Venue: Chiltern Hills Academy, Chartridge Lane, Chesham. Time: 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Grades: All grades Cost: Adults: £8.00 Juniors: £6.00</p>
<p>Sunday 6th September – Grading Examinations <i>Grading examinations will cover all grades up to Black Belt 3rd Dan.</i></p> <p>Venue: Chiltern Hills Academy, Chartridge Lane, Chesham. Time: 10.00 a.m. start Grades: All grades Cost: Standard grading fees apply</p>	<p>Sunday 4th October – Grading training <i>Class will be divided into groups and training focused on the grading syllabus including the kihon (basics) kumite (sparring) and kata required for grading examinations.</i></p> <p>Venue: Chiltern Hills Academy, Chartridge Lane, Chesham. Time: 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Grades: All grades Cost: Adults: £8.00 Juniors: £6.00</p>
<p>Sunday 1st November – Grading training <i>Class will be divided into groups and training focused on the grading syllabus including the kihon (basics) kumite (sparring) and kata required for grading examinations.</i></p> <p>Venue: Chiltern Hills Academy, Chartridge Lane, Chesham. Time: 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Grades: All grades Cost: Adults: £8.00 Juniors: £6.00</p>	<p>Sunday 6th December – Grading Examinations <i>Grading examinations will cover all grades up to Black Belt 3rd Dan.</i></p> <p>Venue: Chiltern Hills Academy, Chartridge Lane, Chesham. Time: 10.00 a.m. start Grades: All grades Cost: Standard grading fees apply</p>