

WASK NEWSLETTER



International WASK Gashuku November 29th – Biggest WASK gathering to date! First Black Belt Promotions and much more!



IN THIS ISSUE:

In this issue of the WASK Newsletter: Upcoming and past event stories including the November WASK international Gashuku. Special piece from Hanshi Scott Brown in our first philosophy discussion. Highlight from the editor - Grants favourite WASK Podcast episode with some special thoughts, and a lot more!

PHILOSOPHY

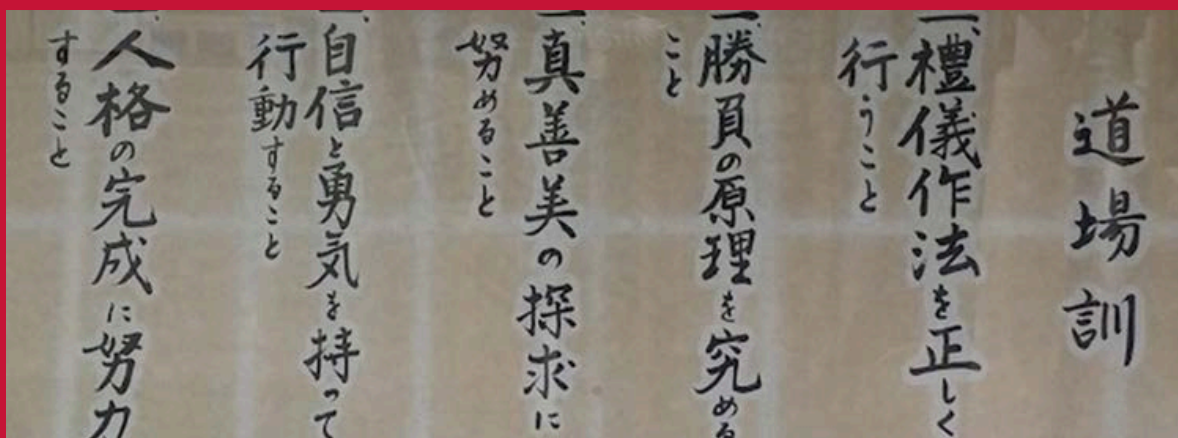


BUN BU RYO DO 文武両道

Something that was drilled into me by our next author, my teacher Hanshi Scott Brown, was the Japanese concept of bun bu ryo do (the path of both pen and sword). He explained to me that the physical application of Karatedo is only one of its many facets and that a dedicated Karateka applies themselves to theory as much as they do physical training. That is why I'm very excited to be able to share some of his wisdom with our readers now through our WASK newsletter. Please read this next piece from him titled: ??? and consider its applications to the part of your identity that is a martial artist. Enjoy.

Grant Brechney
Editor

PHILOSOPHY



THE QUESTION AROUND SPIRITUALITY WITHIN SHORINJIRYU KENKOKAN KARATEDO

Well! I've run out of time once again, to meet the WASK newsletter deadline, trying to balance between working and really wishing to contribute to our WASK members and forum.

I would like to open an area of discussion around the philosophical and spiritual arenas within our practice of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karatedo. I must admit this was one of my primary motivations when embarking upon the Karatedo Journey in 1973.

I am acknowledging we are referencing Scientific Karatedo by Masayuki Hisataka, in Chapter 1 the opening is titled 'Philosophy of Karatedo' sub heading 1. Our moto of 'Spiritual Development of the Individuality in Mind and Body. We also use this as our reference source for both the technical and philosophical inputs and we have the liberty to recount and share our own experiences.

The epitome of this dilemma and enquiry is in my own recollection when asking Hanshi Hisataka in October 1979 about his experience of the concept of Mushin (Empty Mind) within his own practice. His answer was literally *"I have experienced Mushin when I apply myself, however I am too busy these days to worry about that."*

I would like to invite members and instructors within the practice of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan to share their wealth of ideas and insight into our respective journeys and how they actually imbue the broader concept of Spirituality into their dissemination of Shorinjiryu, what methods are used and more importantly how would you measure or quantify if in fact your teaching has efficacy in impacting upon your students behaviour and approach to life.

THE QUESTION AROUND SPIRITUALITY WITHIN SHORINJIRYU KENKOKAN KARATEDO

The motto of Shorinjiryu Karatedo is “doku ji gyo sei ki”. The Shorinjiryu motto was coined by Kaiso Kori Hisataka (1907-1988), founder of Shorinjiryu, and expresses his view that individuality is an important trait developed in a karateka, who must be able to express themselves through their mind and body. It is also my understanding that the large board that used to hang in Hombu Dojo Kaiso Hisataka painted the motto on the board using a rolled up karatedo-gi as the “brush”. This artistic representation of the motto used to be on proud display in the Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karatedo Hombu dojo (HQ) in Waseda.

Does one use the Dojo Kun? do students recite this? If so, how do they apply it and what is their understanding?

The School Principles (Dojo Kun) :

1. Maintain Propriety, Etiquette, Dignity And Grace.
2. Gain Self Understanding By Tasting The True Meaning Of Combat.
3. Search For Pure Principles Of Being: Truth, Justice, and Beauty.
4. Exercise A Positive Personality That Is To Say Confidence, Courage And Determination;
5. Always Seek To Develop The Character Further Aiming Towards Perfection And Complete Harmony With Creation.

More questions than answers at this time, it is also my understanding from a conversation with Jack Kanner whilst I was travelling and training in North America it was himself and some of the senior Canadian students in 1976 that developed the Dojo Kun with Masayuki Hisataka Hanshi for the publishing of Scientific Karatedo.

It is not without hesitation I embark on some musings around the karate journey as too much time has passed since last writing. I am currently researching spirituality within the classical budo or Japanese martial arts in particular karate. My experience is that it is often discussed superficially, and many sensei or teachers would say that spiritual development underpins one's journey within Japanese Budo, however there are few real examples of this manifesting in behaviour and conduct.

Like lots of areas of life that the participants are contrary to the philosophical or spiritual face e.g. a contemporary crises faced by the Catholic Church with priests behaving badly, or within modern spiritual movements of gurus behaving badly, one only has to reference Sam Harris about this phenomenon. The martial arts world is also not devoid of a number of narcissistic and misogynistic characters.

In my experience it is more lip service, and the focus is on competition/sport and physical training. So the question, “What does it mean to be spiritual?” is a primary within the context of this inquiry. Many authors have written that, without doubt, a healthy spirituality is an essential part of one's overall wellbeing (de Souza, 2009, 2014; Durie, 1998; Hyde, 2008; Robbins, Powers, & Burgess, 1991; Seligman, 2011).

Cont...

THE QUESTION AROUND SPIRITUALITY WITHIN SHORINJIRYU KENKOKAN KARATEDO

To be human is to be spiritual; spirituality is innately human (Groome, 1998) irrespective of whether or not, for any individual, spirituality might be experienced and expressed through the traditions and beliefs of one's family, cultural and/or religious context (Kennedy & Duncan, 2006). Spirituality is seen as a life-long journey for the individual, as one's search for meaning and purpose in life. It encompasses the Māori concept of kotahitanga, that in coming to know oneself, one is able to connect with others, to all living things, to nature and the universe, and to transcend the "here and now" (Durie, 1998). The spiritual journey inextricably focuses on an innate quest for the deepest levels of personal integrity and self-awareness, connectedness with all, and with Other. Therefore, taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing) relates to the quality of the relationships established within each of these areas (Fisher, 1998), helping to develop resilience to face the challenges of daily life (Bone, 2007), but also allowing for expressions of wonder and awe, generosity towards all other, optimism, hope and wisdom, and the realising of one's potential for lasting fulfilment (Seligman, 2003 & 2011; Spirituality in the Context of the Aotearoa New Zealand Primary School Classroom, Owen B. Arnst).

Whilst I was teaching high school, and more especially now teaching adults for Ministry of Health in New South Wales Australia, I reference 7 factors of mindfulness in an endeavour to have students develop a helpful referential framework (toolbox) so they can comprehend the meanings and attempt to understand by practice in work, relationships, and socially, then hopefully assimilate and embody these factors as a way to better engage in the world and regulate their own emotions to live more wisely and co-exist in a peaceful and empathic way.

The seven factors I use are promulgated as a type of practical toolbox for embarking and manifesting a spiritual outlook or world view that can be applied in the classroom, then in relationships, and the wider world. Within security risk management and defensive tactics, these are applied more strategically and contextualized around a martial application.



Cont...

THE QUESTION AROUND SPIRITUALITY WITHIN SHORINJIRYU KENKOKAN KARATEDO

They are:

1. Present Centered Awareness (the intrapersonal) - Having an understanding that the mind more often than not is 'future hunting' or 'past regretting' can we keep our students on task and in the moment ?
2. Giving and Holding Attention. (interpersonal) - when engaging with other people are we able to give and hold attention show respect and engagement and not be distracted by devices and or discursive thinking.
3. Receptivity having an awareness/sensitivity of the external and internal objects that arrive in one's consciousness. That is what we: see, hear, feel, taste, and smell (external objects) and our thoughts, emotions and feelings. Develop an understanding that everything that arrives in consciousness is transient and transitory, nothing is permanent, anger sadness and happiness and joy all will pass, we are not our thoughts they to come and go as well.
4. Cultivating Emotional Literacy. Intrapersonal growth? sensitivity Darwin identifies 6 primary emotions Fear, Anger, Happiness, Sorrow, Surprise and Disgust, that we can identify in ourselves, so are we able to know our own particular valence of emotions and feelings at any one time and what stimuli cause us to behave, feel, and emotive in different ways and, more especially, read in another person's facial expressions.
5. Cultivating Emotional Dexterity: Interpersonal sensitivity. I encourage students to be aware what others are feeling and showing them through an understanding or reading these six primary emotions in the other, thus developing empathy and sensitivity to what others may be feeling or going through. Also reading the cues in interpersonal violence and aggression.
6. Objectivity: Dealing with the world of things not necessarily the human interactions even if the issue is brought about by another person, entity or organisation. This factor is about utilising a strategy or tools not to become emotionally hijacked or agitated by things we cannot control in the physical world, e.g. a teacher gives you extra homework, then identify how you feel about that and work out a practical strategy to manage/regulate your emotions and feelings around that stimuli and find practical solutions. This builds resilience, determination and perseverance.
7. Non-Personal Awareness : This awareness is about personal safety and managing fear and anger. If others are in your space (unless threatening to harm physically and inside the 2-meter reactionary gap) then work on making space and de-escalating potentially unwelcome negative energy from others. Enhance your ability to regulate your own emotions to not be hijacked by what others are saying or actions towards you. That is, do not take it personally.

Any way hope I have not bored you. I would love to know what WASK members reflections/insights are on our Motto and Dojo Kun.

I will submit my essay and a more expanded explanation of the 7 factors in the next Newsletter

Scott A Brown, Renshi
Edited by Grant Brechney

KENTOKUKAN YUDANSHA PROMOTIONS PRESENTATION



Story by Luigi Di Fiillipo, edited by Grant Brechney

On May 4th, 2025, Kentokukan had a Yudansha presentation ceremony. Those in attendance witnessed the promotion of three Junior black belts to Nidan and a rare and significant event for any martial art organisation, the promotion of four senior ranks: two Karateka to Shichidan (7th degree) and two to Rokudan (6th degree).

The presentation proceeded in two phases beginning with the Junior promotions for Nidan's Jayden and Tristan Taddeo-Kiet, and Matthew Zhou. This included the traditional belt presentation, toast, demonstrations and speeches from each of the recipients. Tristan could not be in attendance, his Sensei accepted his diploma in his absence.



After the junior, promotions were complete, Shinan Donivan demonstrated Kata Basai Dai, which delighted all those in attendance. Following a brief break the senior rank promotions began. First was Sensei Darren Hunter who was promoted to the Rank of Rokudan. Shihan Hunter was presented his belt by his long-time training partner, Shihan Di Filippo and toasted by Shihan Donivan. He then demonstrated Seisan Kata, Aiki 31 Jo Kata and thanked those that have helped him along his journey.

Next, were those recipients living in Alberta, Canada. This incorporated a new element, a virtual component. Each were presented their diplomas and belts and then briefly spoke. They are travelling to Montreal in late May and will be formally given their belts and diplomas at that time.

PHOTOS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SHORINJIRYU SHINDO SANTA CLARITA & VALENCIA IN-HOUSE TOURNAMENT, WINTER SEMINAR, & BELT TEST!



PHOTOS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SHORINJIRYU SHINDO SANTA CLARITA & VALENCIA IN-HOUSE TOURNAMENT, WINTER SEMINAR, & BELT TEST!



On behalf of WASK, I'd like to extend a huge congratulations to everyone at International Shorinjiryu Shindo. As one of the most active Karate organizations, the sheer amount of events they hold are impossible to cover in a single newsletter. The efforts of everyone in Hanshi Michel Laurin's team of organizers and seniors, as well as himself, deserve a lot of credit for their contributions to the following generations of Shorinjiryu Karateka. I'd also like to extend congratulations to the members that are supporting and participating in these events. It is amazing to share your achievements to the greater WASK community!

If you have stories to share from your organization, please submit them to kenseikai.australia@gmail.com

WASK INTERNATIONAL GASHUKU

NOVEMBER 29TH - 30TH 2025

Save the date everyone! This is the premiere WASK event of the year and a not to be missed opportunity for every Shorinjiryu practitioner in WASK!

The event will be held at the beautiful resort in L'Auberge du Lac Morency de St-Hippolyte, QC, Canada. This facility boasts luxuray accomodation among beautiful lake-side scenery in Quebec. Fantastic quisene and a range of aditional activities are also on offer for the whole family to enjoy an amazing Karate themed holiday experiance!



The Gashuku itself will consist of a range of workshops and seminars conducted by some of the most distinguished international Shorinjiryu Karate masters sharing their extensive knowledge with you!

But that's not all... Highly anticipated award ceremonries will be held to honour some of the legends of Shorinjiryu Karatedo as well as black belt presentations and more!

Further details including pricing will be available shortly. To stay up to date with the latest information, email your interest to Hanshi Michel Laurin, michellaurin@sbcglobal.net

GRANT'S FAVOURITE WASK PODCAST EPISODE



In our first issue in my letter from the editor, I briefly wrote about some of initiatives that WASK has developed for the benefit of its members, and all followers of Shorinjiryu Karatedo. One of the most important initiatives in my opinion, is the podcast series uploaded on our website. I wanted to spend a moment in this current issue to highlight one of my many favourites that have been conducted so far, and this was my interview with Shihan Phill Hooper.

Phill is one of the pioneers of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karatedo (SKK) in Australia, and is a real “salt of the earth” guy. My conversation with him flowed so easily even though we’d only exchanged a handshake on one or two occasions prior, but my own upbringing in SKK was littered with stories of his exploits and contributions to our great art.

I may be showing some bias here by picking an interview I conducted myself and also selecting a fellow Australian, but I guess that’s editors prerogative. More than that however, I found Phill’s insights and comments on the place of tough kumite practice, particularly pertinent to a lot of thoughts that I also share about the martial arts. He spoke a lot about the development of Koshiki competition in Australia and how it really changed the game for how they were able to practice Karate in those early days.

Continued on next page...

GRANT'S FAVOURITE WASK PODCAST EPISODE



Finally having access to equipment that would allow for people to train without holding back their techniques, whilst simultaneously keeping each other safe, is something that transcended the efficiency and their understanding of Karate techniques.

We briefly touched on a concern we share about how some younger generations are shying away from the harder aspects of Karate training in the modern day, and how this could lead to a “watering down” so to speak, of the quality of SKK in the future.

We also covered a range of other topics that had me equally as gripped throughout the conversation. So, I encourage all our readers to take a moment while driving in your car, going for your weekly run, or taking a shower at the end of the day, to navigate to the website via the link below, and give this episode a listen. I’m confident that if you do, you’ll be hooked on our series and find yourself binge listening to the growing range of Shorinjiryu legends that we’ve interviewed so far, and while you’re having fun, you’ll also deepen your own knowledge of SKK.

Thank you all for supporting Volume 2 of the WASK newsletter. I hope you’ve enjoyed our content in this edition.

Grant Brechney, Editor.