

URGENT

**Koshin-ha Chito-Ryu
Karate-Do Association
Newsletter Inside**

About the Newsletter

The Koshin-ha Chito-Ryu Karate-Do newsletter is published bi-annually and is the official publication of the Koshin-ha Chito-Ryu Karate Assn.

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The Editorial Board consists of the Shihan-Kai and Shibu-Kai of the Koshin-ha Chito-Ryu Karate-Do Association.

Questions, Comments, Submissions, Ideas?

Got a question, a comment, a submission, or idea about this or future issues, contact Editor Fara Nizamani: faranizamani@yahoo.com, or call her at 1.800.426.5596 x5410.

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The Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Karate-do Association was formed in 2004 from several of the most senior ranking Chito-ryu practitioners in the United States. The organization was formed to create an environment that allowed for maximum growth of its individual members and dojo while maintaining the highest technical standards.

The Koshin-ha is dedicated to the preservation and development of Chito-ryu karate-do as created by Doctor Tsuyoshi Chitose. It is the belief of the Koshin-ha membership that this goal can best be attained by creating an environment that encourages the development of highly skilled practitioners through an open exchange of ideas among its senior members, and allows the individual dojo chief instructors a part in how the organization is operated.

What's With the Plain Brown Wrapper?

From the editorial staff

Greetings from the editorial staff of the the new Koshin-Ha Chito-Ryu Karate-Do Association newsletter.

It is our hope that you find this publication an enjoyable and resourceful tool in your journey through Chito Ryu.

In each issue, we hope to highlight the inner workings of our various Koshin-ha dojos - promotions, events, pictures, etc.

We also plan to have articles with a more technical feel - one issue may focus on a particular kata and its bunkai, the next issue may have a review of striking points. It's really up in the air.

We hope you feel a connection to this publication, as it will serve as a way for the students of Koshin-ha to maintain contact, continuity and a connection.

You may be wondering why the cover of this inaugural issue is a simple plain

brown wrapper. An oversight? Not this time.

Our newsletter doesn't have a name. It was decided by the Editorial Board that all members should have a voice in naming the newsletter - after all, it's your newsletter.

So we thought the best way to accomplish this was to ask for suggestions from the members and have everyone vote on which name you prefer.

How can you vote? It's easy. Just pick your top choice from the list below and email it to: faranizamani@yahoo.com.

Please type "Newsletter Name" in the subject heading. Problems accessing email? You can always call the Editor, Fara Nizamani, at 1.800.426.5596 x5410 and leave a message with your name preference.

We will tally the votes and announce the newsletter name in the next edition.

Below is a list of names submitted so far, but feel free to add your own and submit it for consideration.

Chito-Times
Koshin-ha Times
The Kiai
Zanshin
Zanshinbun
Koshinbun
Koshin-ha Kaizen
The Koshin-ha Chito-kai News
The Rising Sun

Shinbun means "newspaper" in Japanese
 Kaizen means constant improvement



The Footsteps of a Master

By Fara Nizamani, Editor,
Bellevue Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Dojo, Bellevue, WA

Budo is, by nature, an art of following one's teacher and learning by watching, then physically doing what we have seen in order to understand the lessons that our sensei wants us to learn. We develop a strong sense of loyalty to our teachers by listening to them and doing what they do, for it is by this imitation that we learn. It is not surprising, then, that we often follow our teachers wherever they may go, rarely questioning where or asking why they have chosen the path they have taken. We seek to emulate them and their experiences, often seeing their paths as the ones we should copy, only to wind up frustrated, wondering if our time has been wasted with the effort, confused because we cannot make our footsteps fit the ones left by the teachers we so admire.

As a 7th kyu karate-ka who just began my study of martial arts about a year ago, I often look at my teachers and the others seniors I meet and marvel at their skill. I watch the video clips of the Koshin-ha clinics over and over again, each time looking for some new insight or a demonstrated technique that I may have missed (and sometimes just to be impressed). Many days I

leave the dojo after class wondering if I will ever be half as competent as the yudansha are, because they make everything look so easy. Although each of our teachers has a wealth of experience to share, Hanshi George Van Horne stands out as a teacher who devoted his life to training men and women both inside and outside of the dojo. We clearly see the results of the path he traveled, but less visible are the struggles that he

“Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old; seek what they sought.”

- Matsuo Basho

experienced along the way and the attitudes that undoubtedly shaped his life and work.

Like many budo-ka, Hanshi Van Horne began his study of martial arts for a very practical reason: to learn how to defend himself and his family. He initially chose jujitsu and progressed through the ranks, but this path was not to be straight and easy.

Shortly before he was about to test for brown belt, his teacher died, but he kept on the path, just altering it a little, and began studying Isshin-ryu karate with Sensei Don Nagel, since Nagel Sensei also placed great emphasis on self-defense training. Hanshi Van Horne later moved to Kentucky to accept a job and was one of only two black belts in the

entire state, but he was determined to stay the course and continue his training, so he switched to Chito-ryu because that was the only traditional style of karate in the Northern Kentucky area at the time. Later he studied Aikido and become quite proficient at blending the skills he learned from Aikido with his karate. This made his method of



Hanshi George Van Horne

the level he was at; intellectually, he was exceptional, but putting it together physically was sometimes hard. He moved rapidly through some stages of his training, then seemed to stall. Hanshi Van Horne himself often said that he was too tight and couldn't execute a move as well as he wanted to, but he never let that deter him from teaching his students to the best of his ability. He would show his students what to do and then tell them that they could do it better, even if he couldn't.

instruction and the techniques he taught quite unique. Hanshi Van Horne felt that Chito-ryu was truly unique and in his opinion, Chito-ryu was the best style he had ever witnessed. Considering the fact that he had seen and trained in so many traditional styles, his statement carried tremendous weight with his students.

Many of us beginners look at the seniors and assume that they are naturally gifted athletes for whom all physical activity comes easily, but Kyoshi James Davenport stated that Hanshi Van Horne really had to work at getting to



He encouraged his students to go to other teachers and learn from them as well, demonstrating one of the noblest characteristics of a great sensei:

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Footsteps Cont.

Helping to elevate the student beyond the teacher's ability.

Like many true teachers, Hanshi Van Horne never passed up an opportunity to learn, and when it came to kumite, he was a thinker. According to Kyoshi Davenport, he was extremely proficient at kumite and used to tell his students, "If you do this, I will do this, and then you will do this, and then I will attack here." He knew what you were going to do well in advance, because he had the ability to set up the scenario several techniques prior to the final technique. When he taught classes, he always placed tremendous emphasis on realistic training with the primary goal of developing strong self defense skills, but Hanshi Van Horne knew well that developing the brain is as crucial as developing the body, probably more so. Everything he did was a lesson. He would read stories or small sayings at class, and he knew



that different students would understand it in different ways, and sometimes a student would view the same story in a different light after some time, because he knew that ideas change as we grow and travel down our own path.

Given how much Hanshi Van Horne appreciated practicality, it is no surprise that his favorite weapon was the bo,



although he also studied Iaido (The Way of the Sword) and Kendo (Japanese Sword, sometimes referred to as Japanese Fencing). Kyoshi Davenport related the following story about one of his weapons practices with Hanshi Van Horne: "Sensei always talked about how versatile a weapon the bo was and how it could be used to keep an opponent or several opponents at a distance. Once he told me, 'I'll show you how easy it is to use the bo and how hard it is to get away from it.' First he told me that he was going to strike me over head and told me to move when I saw it coming. I was able to avoid most of the initial strikes, then he took the bo and while holding one end of it, he laid the tip of the other end on the ground. He said, 'Now move away when you see me move.'" I could never escape the strike which came from the ground upward. Since that time, that short lesson has assisted me in my own study of these types of strikes from a karate stand point."

With such skill as a teacher and dedication to his art, it was surprising that Hanshi Van Horne often had very few students, and at times only one (Kyoshi Davenport). His profession was teaching and teachers want to share their knowledge with others, so this must have been quite demoralizing for him, but he didn't let his ego get in the way and he continued on his chosen path of teaching anyone who wanted to

learn. This situation was fortuitous for Kyoshi Davenport, however, because he was given so much that other students were never fortunate enough to have received: The time and personal attention of a man whose passion for his art was so complete that he spent a lifetime learning and teaching it. It is no wonder then that Kyoshi Davenport's students have said to him, after working with Hanshi Van Horne, "Now we understand why you know what you know." Hanshi Van Horne had pointed his students to the path of martial arts and helped them along the way, while always realizing that they would necessarily alter their learning to fit the road they had chosen.

Each of us has our own path. It will not be identical to that of our friends, families, and teachers, nor should it be. My path is decidedly different from Hanshi Van Horne's. It took me almost 40 years before I finally stumbled across the dojo and realized that this was where I should be, only to find myself wrestling daily with seemingly endless frustration as I struggle to grasp the most basic techniques that my fellow students seem to master with ease. I must admit that I have swallowed a few bitter pills of envy as I watch more talented students surpass me in rank, although they started training months after I began, but no matter how difficult the way, I have never regretted taking up the study of Chito-ryu karate; indeed, I am grateful every single day for the discovery of an art that has so profoundly changed my life for the better. However, I can honestly say that one of my greatest regrets is that I did not find this path in

time to meet and train with such an inspirational man, for it is through his efforts, and those that he influenced, that the Koshin-ha Chito-ryu organization has become a reality and has allowed students like me to find our way.

Writer and journalist Walter Lippmann once said, "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on." Hanshi George Van Horne was truly an outstanding leader who blazed a trail for countless budo-ka, and although none of us will tread exactly the same



path that he did, if we continue to seek what he sought, we will honor the memory of this great sensei, this "teacher of teachers," in the most appropriate way possible: Teaching ourselves and others the way of Koshin-ha Chito-ryu karate.

Author's note: Special thanks to Kyoshi James Davenport for his kindness and patience in answering my endless questions.

Code of Conduct

Martial Art Etiquette & Protocol

By Joseph Hedderman, Kyoshi
and James Davenport, Kyoshi

When new students first enter an affiliated dojo of the Koshin-ha Chito-kai, they will immediately observe the disciplined behavior of its members. This behavior is one method in which the military traditions of the art may be seen most clearly. It is based upon a series of traditional, symbolic gestures, the aim of which is to bring about an atmosphere suited to these Japanese and Okinawan warlike arts. Bowing, the most obvious and frequently seen gesture, is only one method by which common courtesies and respect are shown within martial arts organizations. Respect for the dojo teacher, instructors and senior ranked individuals is maintained by a strict, often unwritten code of conduct. This code of conduct, which everyone accepts quite willingly, is based on the capabilities and knowledge of each individual. The capabilities and knowledge are shown by the grade of rank reached and is symbolized by different colored belts worn with the traditional gi (training uniform). Apart from being a simple form of classification, we can see in this system a certain philosophy. We respect the Yudansha (black belt members), not merely because of the positions or rank they may have achieved, but also for the considerable amount of patience, courage and devotion required in reaching their respective levels. This explanation of proper martial art etiquette and protocol has been established to assist in governing the actions of all members so that each of us may develop the proper mental attitude necessary to make genuine progress in our study of Bushido (the martial way).

Titles

There are many titles used to distinguish one karate practitioner from another. We encourage the use of titles to demonstrate courtesy to senior ranked individuals. They deserve our respect because they are our teachers, instructors or senior ranked students. Since Karate is a martial (military) art, many of its traditions are similar in nature to those of the armed forces. All members are encouraged to show proper respect for those individuals who are of higher rank. Karate ranks are divided into two general groups, basic and advanced students. Basic students are ranked in different class groups referred to as kyu ranks. Advanced students are ranked in different levels or degrees referred to as dan ranks.

The Yudansha ranks can be further separated into three categories. The first of three levels, Sho-dan, Ni-dan and San-dan (1st, 2nd & 3rd degree black belts) are considered to be junior black belt ranks. These Yudansha are now considered to be serious students, having demonstrated their devotion and loyalty to their dojo and teacher through continued rigorous training. They should always be addressed by the kyu ranked members as Mr.,

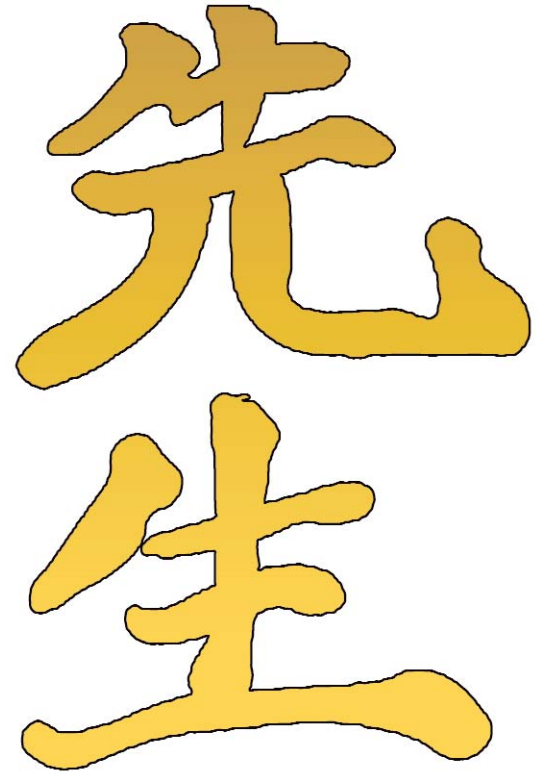
Mrs., or Ms., depending on their status. The Japanese term "san", meaning "with great respect", is another method by which these same individuals may be addressed. When using this method, the proper way to address a person whose surname is Kelly would be Kelly-san. One exception to this rule is when a junior ranked black belt

member serves as the Chief Instructor of his or her own dojo. In this situation, they should be addressed as Sensei at all times by their students. Even though it is common for close friendships to develop among kyu ranks and dan ranks, it is imperative that proper signs of respect and etiquette be exercised at all times. It should also be noted that the junior ranked

black belts may address each other by their given name; however, when involved in any official organizational capacity, they should reference each other by using one of the methods listed directly above

Yon-dan, Go-dan and Roku-dan, (4th, 5th, & 6th degree), the second category, are considered teacher level ranks. These members have not only demonstrated their devotion to their teacher and dojo through their continued rigorous training, but they have also accepted the task of extending their devotion to the art and their organization through their willingness to become teachers of the art.

By far the most often used title in karate is the title, Sensei. The title Sensei (literally meaning, "One who has gone before") is



Sensei

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in fact considered by most teachers to be the most respected title one can be referenced with within the martial arts. Sensei is a title that has been earned and is not simply a position one may temporarily hold; therefore, Yudansha who have acquired the rank of Yon-dan or above are granted the title, Sensei. The fact that a junior ranked black belt may fulfill a position as teacher in a class does not distinguish that person as a Sensei. In these situations they should be reference as Mr., Ms, Mrs, or san, respectively.

The title Shihan (Expert Teacher) is no doubt the second most often used title in karate. The title Shihan is used in the Koshin-ha organization, as well as many other organizations, to recognize those who have many years teaching experience. In the Koshin-ha, the title is issued to members ranked at Go-dan. It is appropriate to address those of Go-dan or higher rank as Shihan, although, referring to them as Sensei is not considered improper.

The third category of Yudansha is referred to as the Kodansha. These Kodansha (Senior Teachers) have accepted the responsibility of insuring that all teachers within the organization are extremely competent and reach their full potential as teachers, thereby spreading the art of Chito-ryu Karate-do. This category is composed of senior teachers who have reached the rank of Nana-dan, Hachi-dan, Ku-dan and Ju-dan (7th, 8th, 9th & 10th degree). The rank of Ju-dan (10th degree) is generally reserved for the Founder of the art, although there are times when a senior ranked member (9th Dan) may be elevated in rank to the level of Ju-dan while the founder is still living.

In addition to the titles listed above, some Yudansha members may have additional titles depending on their individual status within our organization and the martial arts community. Examples of these additional titles would be the classical titles of Renshi, Kyoshi and Hanshi. Connected to the ancient Samurai, these titles came into existence during feudal times and are completely separate from the Dan (Yudansha) ranking system. There have been many translations for these titles, but the Dai-Nippon-Butoku-Kai has listed these titles to mean: Renshi (Experienced Teacher or Senior Expert Teacher), Kyoshi (Master Level Teacher or Teachers of Teachers), Hanshi (Model Teacher or Senior Master Level Teacher). The use of classical titles may be used when deemed appropriate and their use is strictly a matter of demonstrating courtesy to those who have been awarded these titles. The use of these titles often makes it easier for students to differentiate between various teachers when addressing them publicly, especially when numerous teachers are present.

When referencing any Yudansha member through the use of

printed or written material, titles should always be used in addition to their names. There will be occasions when close friends may slightly deviate from the established rules when referencing or interacting with each other. It is considered acceptable for higher ranked members to address lower ranked friends by their given name, but when referring to them in public they should use their name with the appropriate title. It is important to always maintain high traditional standards through the use of proper etiquette and protocol, therefore setting a good example for everyone to follow.

The Dojo

As previously mentioned, bowing is the most obvious and



commonly seen gesture in the martial arts. In the martial art community there are many rules dictating when and how one should bow. When first entering as well as leaving the dojo, all students should bow. The dojo is a place of great respect and should be treated as such. Inside the walls of the dojo, students learn and develop the skills necessary to protect their own lives as well as the lives of others; therefore, the dojo atmosphere should be one of serious training.

Students should conduct themselves accordingly. Loud talking or laughing should take place outside of the dojo. There should be no playing or roughhousing inside the dojo. All activities inside the dojo should be directed toward developing skills in self-awareness and self-defense through self-discipline and the perfection of one's own character. In his book *The Karate Dojo*, Peter Urban explains that "Karate is taught in a school called a dojo. More than merely a gymnasium or a club, a dojo is a cherished place of learning and brotherhood for Karate devotees, but the word "dojo" implies an even broader meaning: to the dedicated student, the dojo soon becomes a concept, a way of life. The word is symbolic of the methodological, the ideological, the philosophical aspects of Karate. Thus, the study of Karate involves far more than the learning of certain physical techniques; it absorbs the student wholly; his character is as much affected by Karate as is his body."

Sensei Don Draeger, another respected American martial artist and author, spent several decades training in numerous martial arts throughout Japan. He also wrote about the dojo. "To the inexperienced trainee, the dojo is nothing more than a place for physical exercise. Everything he or she sees, hears, or does stands outside their familiar, everyday existence. In fact; the dojo is austere, a humble place of natural and quite dignity. The dojo is occupied

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by trainees at all levels of progress. The Sensei has supreme authority, which he exercises through formal etiquette; the trainee is expected to conform to all such formalities, learning them by copying what he sees his Seniors do.”

Training Area

The training area within the dojo is also shown great respect. It's considered proper to rei “bow” before stepping onto the practice area. In every traditional dojo there is a wall set aside for a Kamiza “the upper seat or a place of honor”. All Koshin-ha dojo, whether they are located in their own building or in a training room at a health club, should have a picture of Dr. Chitose as a part of their Kamiza. Some dojo will include as a part of their Kamiza other items to be honored, such as an American or Japanese flag, or even additional items which have special meaning to the dojo participants.

The proper method by which to approach the training area is first to bow toward the Kamiza and then bow toward the highest ranked individual in the training area. When leaving the training area the reverse order is followed: First, bowing toward the highest ranked person and then towards the Kamiza. This act of courtesy is another method by which respect is shown for the dojo and senior ranked individuals. A further explanation of this rule is: you should always bow to both the Kamiza and the highest ranked person present on the training area prior to entering or exiting the area. If the highest ranked person present in the training area sees your bow, he or she will return the gesture. If facing another direction and he or she does not see you bow, you do not have to wait for the returned bow, you may enter the area immediately. If for some reason you need to leave the training area early, you should always ask permission first. It is considered rude and a breach of proper etiquette to leave the training area without first having acquired permission.

If there is a class already in session and you are late, the proper way to approach the training area is to take a kneeling position, bow and meditate for a short period of time. After opening your eyes, bow again and remain kneeling until you are given permission to enter by the instructor. Once permission has been granted for you to enter the training floor, you should bow toward the Kamiza and then toward the highest ranked individual before actually stepping onto the training floor. Reverse the procedure if you are given permission to leave class early. There is an exception to the rule for those who have knee injuries. Sitting in a crossed leg position or standing in Musubi-dachi is acceptable.

Training with a Partner

When two individuals practice together as partners, it is proper protocol and etiquette to “Rei” (bow) to each other before and after the session. If your opponent (partner) is of higher rank than yourself, your bow should be slightly lower and held until the senior rank has risen from the bow completely. Bowing is an eastern method of demonstrating genuine respect for each other, much the same as a hand shake is used in the western world. You should take great pride in learning how to execute a proper bow. The act of bowing should not be carried to an extreme. When students bow by rigidly snapping their heels together or bowing excessively low, it defeats the very purpose of proper etiquette

and only serves to demonstrate their lack of understanding regarding the proper method of executing a bow.

When bowing, the eyes are lowered, but not as if you are looking directly at the floor below your own feet. With practice you can develop your peripheral vision, which will allow you to see the other person's position. Through the use of your peripheral vision you can develop the ability to know if the higher ranked individual is still bowing or has completed their bow. Looking directly at the person you are bowing toward is considered improper and does not follow proper etiquette. This method was developed in relation to the tournament scene and has no connection to proper etiquette as followed in traditional martial arts. In an attempt to add validity to this type of bow it has been said that one should always keep their eyes on their opponent, even when bowing. This reasoning seems somewhat comical, especially considering the fact that no one would bow to a person who was attacking him or her.

Special Courtesies

There are times when special courtesies are given to advanced students (black belts). When a higher ranked Yudansha, other than those present, enters the dojo, the first person to recognize him or her should give the command “Face front” or “Face Sensei”. With this command, all students should face the entrance while standing at attention (Musubi-dachi). With the next command “Rei” everyone should bow in unison and remain at Musubi-dachi until given the command “Continue”.

Another time when special consideration is given is when a Yon-dan or higher ranked teacher approaches the training area. This situation is treated similar to the one above. The first person to recognize him or her should give the command “Face front” or “Face Sensei”; all should bow in unison.

When addressed by a senior ranked black belt, students should stand up straight and give their complete attention to the Yudansha's remarks. Remember, it's not required to give a “snap to it” type of attention; this type of response can be misinterpreted as phony. Relax, but be courteous. Proper etiquette and protocol are easy to follow with continued effort, practice and self-awareness of what is transpiring around us.

Meetings

The most senior ranked individual present will act as Chairman at all Association meetings. When senior rank members are speaking they should never be interrupted. It is important that respect is shown to all members, regardless of rank or title.

Responsibility & Awareness

It is everyone's responsibility to conduct themselves properly. Senior students bear the greater responsibility for demonstrating proper protocol and etiquette; after all, they are the ones who have been training the longest. Who is responsible for enforcing this code of conduct? Traditionally, enforcement largely rests on the shoulders of those of lesser rank as opposed to those of higher rank. You will seldom witness a senior ranked individual correcting someone who did not treat him or her with proper respect. Ultimately, it is everyone's responsibility to learn and practice proper protocol and etiquette. Those who know should assist those who do not know.

Koshin-ha Budokan of Palm Beach Hosts Kyoshi Davenport

By Edward Butzin, Sensei, Koshin-ha Budokan of Palm Beach, Jupiter, Florida

The Koshin-ha Budokan of Palm Beach hosted the On Ko Chi Shin Karate Seminar on Saturday, March 24, 2007, at Osborne Park in sunny Florida. This seminar was for all levels and styles, and featured Kyoshi James Davenport as the guest instructor.

Kyoshi Davenport arrived on Thursday afternoon, and we immediately began our training with a visit to seminar participant Phil Burney, a shodan in Uechi-ryu, who owns the local karate supply store.

On Friday morning we went to the beach and worked out while the sun came up, then after breakfast we spent some time in our hot tub warming up for some more serious work in the afternoon, which mainly involved cruising about and ending up at a café on the Intracoastal Waterway where we wiled away the afternoon, talking (mostly about karate, of course) and enjoying the scenery. Friday night we went to a local hangout, a sports bar

owned by a friend of mine, which has the best NY strip steaks in town.

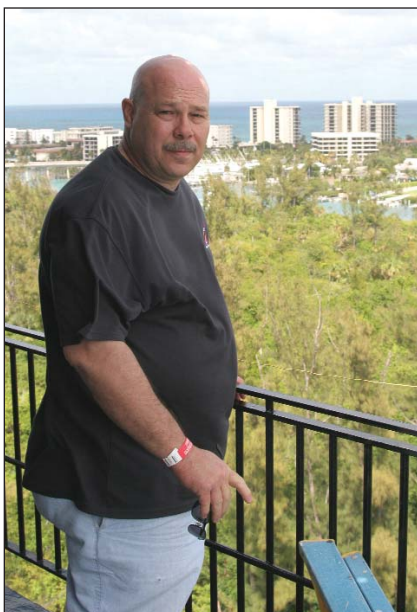
Saturday was a very full day. We met up with most of the people who were attending the seminar and worked out on the beach again. Another lovely sunrise. We grabbed a quick

breakfast then headed into the seminar for four hours of excellent instruction from Sensei. The attendees all had a great time and enjoyed the practicality of the seminar topics, which included kata bunkai and oyo (analysis and applications of the kata movements) and principles of application (universal laws applied to enhance the speed and power of all karate techniques).

They especially liked the last hour where we pulled out the mats and then practiced techniques for breaking a person's balance. Another well-received part of the seminar was the drawing for a chance to attend an NHL hockey game with Kyoshi, my wife, and me, which was won by my student, Alex Besmer. After a quick dinner, we drove down to Sunrise, Florida, where the Florida Panthers hosted the New Jersey Devils in a game that ran into overtime and then a shoot out. The Panthers lost in the shoot out 2-1 but we still had a great time.

No rest for the wicked, so after the hour and a half drive home we hit the sack about 1 am and then got up again at 6 to meet Al Maeyens, my senior student, on the beach for another workout at sunrise. Nothing better than working out in the sand as the sun comes up over the ocean with mostly sunny skies, temp 65 degrees, and a stiff breeze. Then after relaxing at home and another dip in the hot tub we went into town and visited the Jupiter lighthouse. The lighthouse was just reopened recently and we were able to go up to the top and walk around outside. Then we hit the beach to "train" again by wandering around looking for critters. We saw several Portuguese Man-O-War and of course the usual sea gulls and sand pipers.

Monday morning consisted of another stop for breakfast, (A word to those who want to score points with Kyoshi: He loves the corn meal pancakes at IHOP), and then I dropped him off at the airport, where he flew back to Kentucky with a great tan and the best wishes of the Palm Beach dojo.



Another Successful Kangeiko held in Frankfort, Kentucky

By James Davenport, Kyoshi, Kentucky Budo-kan, Frankfort, KY, and Fara Nizamani, Bellevue Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Dojo, Bellevue, Washington

The Kentucky Budo-kan in Frankfort hosted a very successful Kangeiko on January 13, 2007. Twenty-six students of all levels took part in the four-hour training, which was open to all styles. Instruction was divided into four blocks, each with a different topic. We covered Chito-ryu kata and informal kata, along with corresponding applications, as well as basic techniques executed with biomechanics directly related to the concepts of the system of Chito-ryu, because with proper biomechanics speed and power can be greatly enhanced.

As has always been the case, other important subjects designed to improve the students' skill level were covered in this kangeiko as well, since our goal is to give the students a tremendous amount of information that they can take back with them and use to improve their technique.



Kyoshi Hedderman conducts Kangeiko at Bellevue Dojo

By Fara Nizamani, Bellevue Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Dojo, Bellevue, Washington

What do a nickel, a magazine, and a key have in common? If you are Kyoshi Joseph Hedderman, they are all everyday objects that can be turned into weapons before a would-be assailant has time to blink, as we in the Seattle area found out last January.

The members of the Bellevue dojo eagerly anticipated Kyoshi Hedderman's arrival to oversee the January 19th belt tests, followed by our first-ever Kangeiko the next day. We were not disappointed. The weather was unusually cooperative for Seattle in the winter, and we were lucky enough to have a fairly warm, sunny day, perfect for three hours of special training. An added bonus was the view from the second floor of the South Bellevue Community Center – tall, stately evergreens that perfectly demonstrated why Seattle is known as the “Emerald City.” We even had a couple of energetic squirrels try to join our ranks.

Kyoshi Hedderman began the seminar with warm-ups, followed by application instruction that was informative and practical, helping us more fully understand what we learn in class. Perhaps the most enjoyable part of the day came when Kyoshi Hedderman pulled out some innocent-looking objects and demonstrated how to use them for self-defense. “I learned of many new pain points that can be applied in real life, and they are the most curious ones I’ve ever seen,” said one student.

Another student was grateful merely to still be in one piece. “I’m very glad I wasn’t his test subject, because now I can still play violin.”

The squirrels just gave us hostile looks and refused to be interviewed.

Kyoshi Hedderman's expertise in martial arts was matched by his sense of humor, as we found out both during and after the clinic. The participants met for dim sum lunch at the Noble Court, a local Chinese restaurant, where the younger students demonstrated their laser-like targeting prowess and amazing hand speed by filling up their table with plates of almost everything on the carts in less than three minutes. We older students were in awe.

After lunch, the students reluctantly said goodbye to our guest. Thanks to both Sensei Dipboye and him, our first Kangeiko was a success, and we all agree that we can't wait for Kyoshi Hedderman to visit our dojo again.



Allegheny County Budo-Kai Students Train in the Snow

By Rick Sbuscio, Sensei, Allegheny County Budo-kai Pittsburgh



To commemorate a period when the members trained outside for two years, the current students of the Allegheny County Budo-kai took their training out into the snow on February, 18th. The members who braved 20 degree temperatures and six inches of snow and ice, practiced basic karate, kata and kobudo (weapons) for about an hour and a half. Clothing consisted of anything you could wear under your gi, shoes, hat and gloves.

“For about two years in the mid-eighties, our dojo ran into some financial trouble, so the members trained outside three times a week in all kinds of weather,” said Sensei Sue Sbuscio. “We try to have this outside training session on a cold and snowy day to have fun and honor the memory of what others had to endure in the past.”

“Actually, it is a good way to train sometimes,” commented another student. “You really get to see what will work in bad weather. High kicks, spins, stuff like that go right out the door. You have to stick to basic, solid karate technique.”

When Your Heart Gets in the Way

Why a strike to the solar plexus hurts

By Keith Dipboye, MD, Sensei, Bellevue Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Dojo, Bellevue, Washington

NO SUCH THING AS THE SOLAR PLEXUS

“There is no such structure as the solar plexus,” my anatomy teacher announced

with the pomposity and certainty possessed only by tenured professors and royalty. As a shodan in Chito-ryu, I was bothered by this because I knew that the punches I had taken to my solar plexus sure felt real. The typical explanation I had heard for why a strike to the solar plexus – the area just below your sternum where your ribs join in

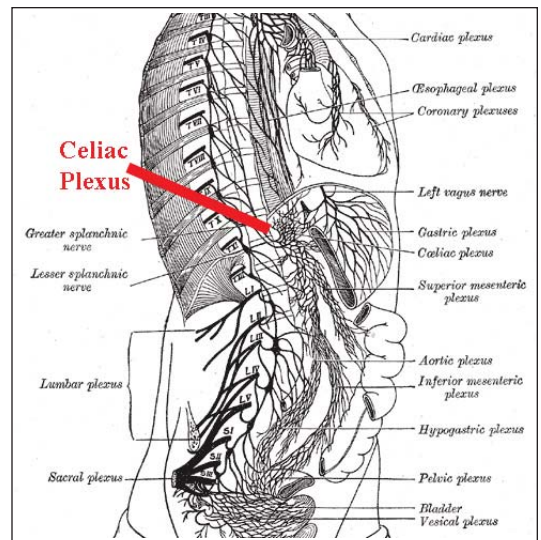
front – can be so devastating, is that the big nerve bundle there that controls breathing, heart rate and digestion is being damaged. When, as a

first year medical student, we started exploring cadavers, I found myself somewhat convinced by my professor: I couldn’t find, via scalpel and retractor, anything in the upper abdomen that seemed to explain why a blow to the solar plexus is so disabling.

There are big nerve bundles in the abdomen but the one usually referred to as the solar plexus – the celiac plexus – is much closer to the spine than to the surface. It is tucked in behind the stomach and liver; even the heart is closer to an entering fist than that nerve bundle.

The celiac plexus is the primary wiring responsible for

What techniques work and why

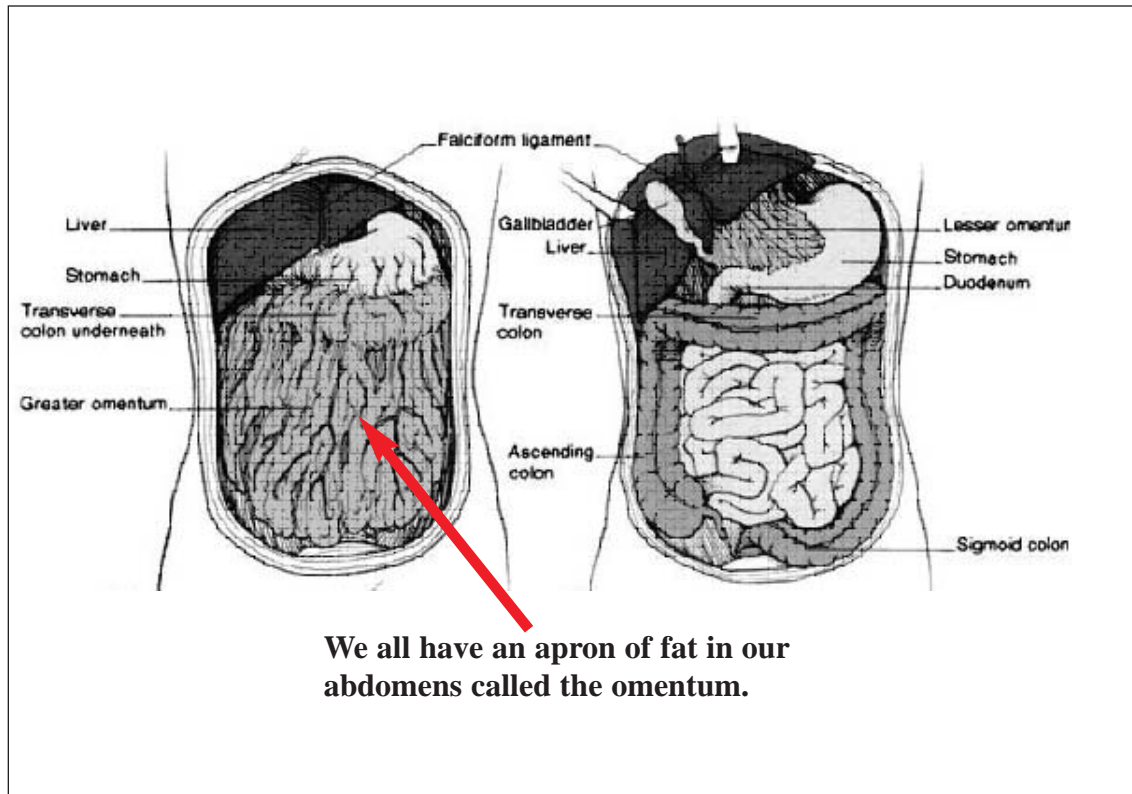
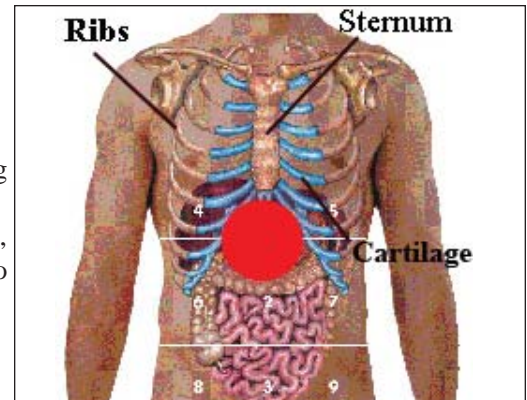


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many vital functions such as adrenal secretion (adrenaline) and movement of the intestines, but it doesn't control breathing or heart function. A blow transmitted to the celiac plexus will certainly cause pain and nausea and could possibly momentarily halt function of the intestines. So it is probably true that some of the pain from a solar plexus blow comes from impact to this big bunch of nerves. However let's delve a little further in to what else is there, and what isn't there.

What ISN'T there: BONE

The heart, lungs, diaphragm, along with most of the liver and kidneys – all very delicate organs – are hidden behind the rib cage and sternum (the strong bone running down the center of the chest). A powerful strike to the rib cage or sternum can fracture the bones, can cause pain and certainly discourage an attacker. However, the ribs, along with the cartilage and muscles that hold them together, form a layer of armor so sturdy that it takes quite a blow to actually penetrate and damage the vital organs underneath. The solar plexus is the area just below the point where the ribs join the sternum so it is, by definition, unshielded by bone.



We all have an apron of fat in our abdomens called the omentum.

What ISN'T there: FAT

The human anatomy depicted in medical diagrams is typically the anatomy of an underwear model – there is never any fat. (Fact: according to FBI statistics, the average karate-ka is very unlikely to be attacked by an underwear model, so long as the karate student carefully avoids the hair salons, tanning booths and mirrors where they tend to congregate.) While most of us are aware of our love handles at our waist and the fat under our skin that makes us so huggable, many people don't realize that the majority of their fat is hidden inside their bodies. Fat surrounds organs, serves as protective cushions for blood vessels, nerves and, importantly for our discussion,

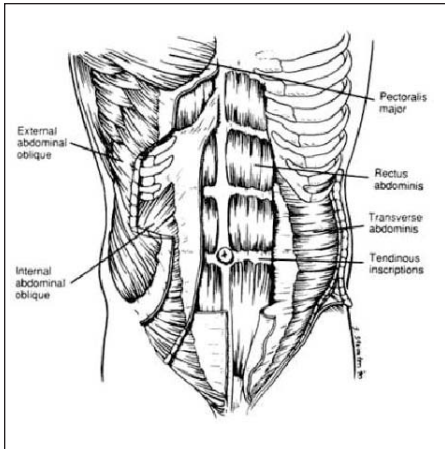
forms a large apron hanging inside the abdomen called the *omentum*. Depending on how trim you are, your *omentum* is anywhere from a few inches to over 1 foot thick. So the abdominal organs, blood vessels and nerves are – in non-underwear-models – protected behind a thick, soft cushion. This is one reason why the belly is not your prime target if confronted by a guy with a beer gut. While the omentum is a formidable layer of soft gushy armor, it originates *just below* the solar plexus, leaving this area unguarded by fat.

What ISN'T there: MUSCLE

The muscles of the abdomen form another shield protecting the vital organs inside.

The muscles of the abdomen run in layers traveling in every possible direction – vertically, horizontally and diagonally. Even a beginning karate student can learn to take a fairly hard blow to the abdomen by tensing up their muscles. And, while the muscle wall extends from the pelvis and spine all the way up to the rib cage, it is in the solar plexus area that the abdominal muscle wall is

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the thinnest. The muscle wall in front of the solar plexus is ¼th as thick as the wall in the belly-button area.

What IS there: HEART, DIAPHRAGM AND LIVER

If you have practiced karate for more than a few months, you know from experience that a blow to the abdomen when you have exhaled, emptied your lungs, is far less painful than if you are caught with your lungs full of air. This rule applies in particular to blows near the solar plexus. In fact a skilled karate-ka won't be stopped by a hard blow to the solar plexus if he/she knows how to prepare and breathe properly.

Let's start with what happens to your anatomy during a deep breath:

You have to relax the muscles between your ribs and your lower abdomen to allow room for your lungs to expand. The entire chest wall and abdomen goes soft as these

muscles lose tension.

As you take in a deep breath, your diaphragm tenses up, shortens and flattens out. While it is more solid in this position, it is a very thin muscle so doesn't offer much in the way of protection to your heart or lungs above. Because *every other muscle is relaxed and flexible*, the shockwave of a solar plexus blow will stretch and vibrate the tense diaphragm like a drum – this can induce muscle spasm in the diaphragm causing the victim to look (and feel), for several seconds, like they have forgotten how to breath.

When your diaphragm tenses to fill your lungs, it pulls downward in your chest, bringing your heart out of hiding. In this position, the thinnest and most fragile part of the heart – the right ventricle – is just a few inches from the surface, in position to take much of the impact from a sharp solar plexus blow. Compressing the right ventricle of the heart can cause a major disruption of blood flow, possibly causing loss of consciousness; theoretically a blow to the right ventricle could stop a person's heart by causing *fibrillation*, essentially a spasm in the heart muscle that stops it from beating.

Finally, your liver, which sits close to the surface, is also exposed with a deep breath.

Unlike hollow organs (stomach, intestines) that have some 'give' to them, the liver is solid and so fragile that it is easily damaged by the force of a punch or kick. (A liver laceration can cause fatal bleeding within a few hours without emergency surgery.) Part of the pain of a solar plexus blow is your body saying, "Hey, stupid, you've only got one liver, and you need it."

The opposite happens when you push the air out of your lungs and tense your abdominal wall muscles:

The tense abdominal muscles form a solid wall from the pelvis and spine to the rib cage. As the muscles between the ribs contract, the rib cage itself also goes more solid – the equivalent of donning a suit of armor.

Ironically, the only muscle in your abdomen that relaxes when you exhale forcefully is the one you use to breath. Your diaphragm, the big parachute-shaped sheet of muscle below your lungs relaxes to breath out, tenses to take in a breath. With the diaphragm relaxed, a blow to the solar plexus jiggles the diaphragm but doesn't stretch or shock it.

As you relax your diaphragm, tense your abdomen and push air out, the location of your heart and liver change – they rise in your chest wall until they are protected by your rib cage and sternum. This is the most important reason why a blow to the solar plexus isn't as devastating when you are prepared – the most vital organs are all shielded.

There isn't a single vital organ that hurts when you are struck in the solar plexus, there are several. Avoiding a knock out when you are struck in the solar plexus is all about protecting your heart, liver, diaphragm and celiac plexus; it is, just as you learned in your earliest Chito-ryu classes, all about breathing.

