

## SHOTOKAN RYU KASE HA INSTRUCTORS ACADEMY

SRKHIA Newsletter 7/03

Dear karateka,

It is said that practice of martial arts is for young people; many would argue with that aphorism. I would agree that it a youth's business, however what is considered youth? Samuel Ullman in his excellent poem YOUTH, gives his view, which I personally fully subscribe. It was also the favourite poem of General Douglas Mac Arthur (he needs no introduction). Enjoy it.

"Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind; it is not a matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees; it is a matter of the will, a quality of the imagination, vigor of the emotions; it is the freshness of the deep springs of life.

Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity of the appetite, for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of sixty more than a boy of twenty. Nobody grows old merely by a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals.

Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, fear, self-distrust bows the heart and turns the spirit back to dust.

Whether sixty or sixteen, there is in every human being's heart the lure of wonder, the unfailing child-like appetite of what's next, and the joy of the game of living. In the center of your heart and my heart there is a wireless station; so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage and power from men and from the infinite, so long are you young.

When the aerials are down, and your spirit is covered with snows of cynicism and the ice of pessimism, then you are grown old, even at twenty, but as long as your aerials are up, to catch the waves of optimism, there is hope you may die young at eighty"

Budo Themes:

In the longtime evolution of martial arts, although many names are famous, there are few who have definitely influenced their development.

Dirk Heene, as a modern Lucianos, provides his insight of the "Parallel lives" of Bodhidharma and Kase Taiji and their influence on the development of martial arts. Here is the first part of the story, the second will appear in the next Newsletter.

## BODHIDARMA'S INFLUENCE ON BUDDHISM IN EARLY 6TH CENTURY

In the period preceding the 6th century AD one could not speak of noble or philosophic influence in Oriental martial arts. Only the roughest and hardest specimens of society were deemed fit for fighting and warfare. These did not involve chivalry, higher human aspirations or philosophy of life.

At the beginning of the 6th century an Indian monk came to China. He undertook this long journey to broaden his vision on Buddhism. Later on his vision was called 'Chan' (Japanese: Zen). The monk's name was Bodhidharma, or Dharma, in a shortened version. In China he was commonly called 'Damo'.

He arrived by ship in Guangzhou and then traveled to the North. At that time many Indian monks journeyed to China to do mission-work. Lots of them asked an interview from the Chinese emperor, in order to get support for the building of monasteries and temples. Damo, as well, asked an interview from the Chinese emperor, but it did not turn well.

Damo's main interest was his vision on Buddhism, and not any material or detrimental things. The emperor wanted to make a practical arrangement with Damo but he did not get that far. Wisdom cannot be bought; It is pure, difficult to gauge and can surely not be reached through material actions. Zen is in the perception of one's own nature. The enigmatic answers of Damo infuriated emperor Wu and Damo left the palace, with the intention never to return there.

Damo left Nanjing and continued his journey through China. In 527AD he arrived in the Buddhist monastery of Shaolin (built in 495). In Shaolin, many Sanskrit works were translated into Chinese. The monks worked day and night, in shifts. They translated over 600 works in their language.

At Damo's arrival in the monastery the abbot was afraid that the religious beliefs of the monastery would be disturbed by the Chan-theory of this newcomer, who thought that learning from books was unnecessary. The abbot requested Damo not to live in the monastery any more. Damo choose a cave as his shelter and he wanted to prove that "the highest form of wisdom had nothing to do with the orthodox performance of ritual practice, nor with the translation of Sanskrit texts into Chinese".

He began to meditate every day, seated in front of a stone wall in the cave. After some time the monks started feeling admiration and they went to visit the 'spiritual eccentric' in his cave. Damo remained in meditation throughout and avoided conversation. Finally the abbot could not overlook Damo's authority any more and Damo entered the Shaolin monastery, as the first patriarch of Chan (Zen). He observed the monks, their meditation and religious practice. Their muscles were weak, their bodies powerless and certainly not in a condition to withstand hard mental exercise.

The sole object of original Buddhism was the salvation of the soul, but Damo proved that spirit and body are inseparable. The unity of both must be strengthened in order to be able to reach enlightenment (Satori). Soon following his return, Damo introduced his strengthening exercises to the monks.

Damo developed two series of exercises; The YI-JIN-JING and the XI-SUI-JING.

YI-JIN-JING: "Classical strengthening of muscles and nerves". A complex of 12 Qi-gong exercises to make the body more mobile and strong.

XI-SUI-JING: "Classical bone marrow growth". A collection of inner and outer exercises for mediation and Ki-flow.

Damo was probably inspired during his travels by Taoist priests, who had been using such techniques for centuries. He was influenced by Indian yoga as well. In any case, as the monks started exercising and rehearsing daily, they steadily grew stronger and healthier. The striving for inner strength and the intuitive enjoyment it procured, gave the monks perseverance and stamina, combined with a sense of

improvement and moral clarity. Contrary to all Buddhist ideas, Damo brought about the essence of the newly-founded Chan.

## YI-JIN-JING and XI-SUI-JING

After the death of Damo in 536AD (probably by poisoning), the exercises became an integral part of monastery life and Zen grew into one of the most important tendencies in Asia.

YI-JIN-JING and XI-SUI-JING were at first exercises for the monk's energetic and spiritual perfection; Later on they became the bases for all styles of Asian martial arts.

After Damo's death, his successors in Shaolin took care of the Chan-teachings and the practice of YI-JIN-JING and XI-SUI-JING. Outside Shaolin, qigong exercises were not used, except in taoist-inspired tendencies. Thus Shaolin quickly became a rather special Buddhist monastery. The monks were regarded with suspicion and mistrust by other monasteries.

When Zen was introduced in Japan, qi gong exercises had nearly all disappeared. In the 14th century YI-JIN-JING was only practiced as part of the newly developing martial arts; XI-SUI-JING was completely forgotten. It was only in the Qing-dynasty (1644-1911) that the old teachings of Damo spread again widely, when the masters in martial arts arose against the mandshoes in secret leagues (Hui-Dang).

We can state that Chan, in its basic face, was much more Taoist-oriented and that it moved further away from Buddhism. In the style of movements especially, there is an interchange between Chan-followers and Taoists. Damo himself was strongly inspired by Taoism. The impulses, that were important for martial arts, thus have Taoist as well as Buddhist origins.

## INFLUENCE ON MARTIAL ARTS

## BUDDHIST QIGONG

Indian yoga and Tibetan related yoga have little influence. Chinese developed further since Daruma. In origin: taking care of the spirit and further developing it; ameliorate Karma. Health, body care and physical exercises were then of less importance.

## TAOIST QIGONG

Cannot be seen apart from healing qigong. The principle is that the spirit can only be cultivated if one lives life, and best of all a life with health and well-being. Coupled to spiritual development based on unity of man-nature-tao. Spirit and body are inseparable and should be trained simultaneously.

Especially the healing aspect evolved more and more. That is why almost all YI-JIN-JINH and XI-SUI-JING exercises are strongly Taoist influenced, such as the martial arts that flowed from them, tai-chi-chuan and ba-gua-chuan. Taoists exercised more in public whilst the Buddhists were somewhat more reticent. Taoists were also the only ones to put their experience on paper.

## SHAOLIN INFLUENCE

500 years after Damo's death, the exercising of YI-JIN-JING and XI-SUI-JING also revived in the Shaolin monastery. Their values gradually got a place in Shaolin martial arts as basis for fighting techniques.

In origin there were 12 non-martial exercises, accompanied by breathing techniques and a deep state of mind. Later they were inserted in between fighting exercises (Chinese, Lu; Japanese, Kata). The aim was to take away some of the aggressiveness in combat techniques and not to block the Ki-flow. The techniques were thus handed down in later styles and they still appear in different forms of fighting arts.

## Notes

HUI-DANG: A secret society in China that dates back to the 'five old ones'. In Chinese fighting arts this refers to the five Shaolin patriarchs that survived the Mongol attack on the Shaolin monastery, in 1673. The next 200 years they organized the resistance against the Mandsoes and they were the forefathers of the notorious Triads; a secret group that is still active nowadays, be it in more criminal affairs.

These 'five old ones' laid the basis for the five main kung-fu styles practiced nowadays: Hung-gar, Liu-gar, Mok-gar, Li-gar and Choy-gar. Chinese martial arts have developed for years in secret societies and they have come to us this way.

KARMA: Not to be confused with: 'fate, destiny'. Should be seen as a connection between: cause-action-result (or consequence)

## Reports

In May 2003 the Israeli Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Academy organized its annual Seminar, under the direction of Farkash Arie sensei. The situation in Israel, as we all know, is not the easiest one, but for our Israeli colleagues tradition is tradition, so their Annual seminar took place and it was a big success. Pascal Lecourt attended this seminar and did a very good job. All participants liked him and thank him for his instruction.

Farkash Arie sensei, will visit Australia in July 2003. The purpose of this trip is to enhance the knowledge of Shotokan ryu Kase ha karatedo there. Arie sensei started a few years ago to introduce SRKH in this corner of the world. Since last year the Australian members extended their contact, so instead of one seminar per year they are organizing once a year a tour of seminars to their main 4 central Dojo and once a year, a big annual seminar all dedicated to this direction. This year seminars will take place from 4 - 6 July Tasmania, 6 - 7 July

Melbourne, 8 -10 July Save (Victoria) and 11 -13 July Sydney.

A two days training seminar, with Dirk Heene Sensei & Pascal Lacourt, was hosted in Dublin on Wednesday the 30th of April and Thursday the 1st May 2003.

Wednesday's class was given by Dirk Heene and despite it being mid-week karate-ka had travelled from Glasgow, Belfast and Offaly for the event.

Following the warm-up training began with uke practice using five basic blocks followed by Hente and Seite counter attacks. Particular focus was put on the correct timing and effective use of each block and each counter attack option along with correct breathing, concentration and visualisation.

We moved on to combine this with leg and body movement. This kihon practice was used for Kumite in order to test what we had just worked on. The partner work began with basic block and counters and moved on to use hente waza and/or seite waza. This was expanded to incorporate stance changes, sideways movement with gyaku uraken counter to disengage and finally using geri waza where the opportunity and opening allowed. The final part of training consisted of Heian Nidan practice. The kata was first practiced in it entirety, then in Ura and then broken into easily digestible segments to practice the application of each move. Each section was given a number of possible variations which allowed the karate-ka at each level to explore the possibilities at their own pace depending on their level of experience and ability.

Thursday's class was restricted to Dan grades only and was given by Pascal Leourt. Training began with Kihon practice using zuki waza and a front leg or back leg Mae geri. There was a small variation on the timing and distance of the first and a second combination. We then moved on to develop these two combinations to use open hand uchi waza along with front or back leg Mawashi geri. Finally we mixed the straight zuki and Mae geri techniques with the circular open hand uchi and Mawashi geri and techniques, which necessitated an element of choice.

Kumite practice used the kihon that had been working on as the attacks and blocking first on the spot. Uke practice quickly developed to use both sides of the body with omote and gyaku blocks moving back in a straight line and finally using side steps and tai-sabaki. Focus was

placed upon switching the blocks to combinations where blocks were inside or outside (close or open) and used both sides of the body and progressing to combine stance and blocking angle changes. This allowed the defender to control the interchange to a greater extent. This made it more and more difficult for the attacker. Sensei Lacourt stressed the importance of attacking with full speed and power while the defender worked their partner to achieve a confidence where one can almost "play" with even the fiercest of attacks.

The session concluded with a version of Bassai-dai that practiced each sequence on both sides (almost twice as long as the kata). The idea being that the oyo form would work both sides of the brain and encourage the response to attacks to be more spontaneous. It shouldn't matter which side the attacker is using the defense and counter attack must be efficient and effective. This left us with plenty of bunkai to practice over the coming summer months.

A group of karate-ka from Dublin, along with Paul Sammy from Glasgow who had travelled to Ireland for the two-day course, then travelled on to Aberdeen to take part in the weekend training course. On our return journey to Ireland we agreed that we had five fantastic days of training.

Seminars in Dublin with Pascal Lacourt will take place on June 26th and November 22nd & 23rd. Dates of future Seminars with Dirk Heene are to be announced. For further details contact: [shotokanireland@hotmail.com](mailto:shotokanireland@hotmail.com)

#### Recommended Courses:

Kase sensei will teach in Andorra, in the well known yearly organized event, on 23-27 July. If you are planning to go in Andorra, please note that at the evening on Friday 25th July, a dinner, with the presence of T. Kase sensei, will be organized. The price for this event is 36 euro per person and registration will take place during registration for the advanced training course. Last day of registration: the 24th of July.

You have received information for the Academy's Gashuku 2003, which will take place in Mullheim, Germany on 27th and 28th September 2003. Pascal Petrella is doing an excellent job in preparing the event. Mark your calendar and do your planning. More information on courses with all instructors, you may find in [www.kamikazeweb.com/events](http://www.kamikazeweb.com/events) Please be



reminded that all received information relevant to courses, by SRKHIA instructors, are forwarded to Frank Schubert for insertion in the Calendar of events in that site, so it is always updated.

Membership status:

Following last month's list of members for 2003 we received some remarks from colleagues who have paid but they were not on the list. After consulting with the bank some things were clarified, so you find attached the final version of Membership list. Members who did not fulfil their financial obligations have got a Dormant membership status, meaning suspension from all Academy activities during 2003. The same applies to DE SCHAHT Eddy, (Belgium), ACHILLES Wilfred, (Germany), SWOREK Robert, RYBARCZYK Richard (Poland), and WATT Richard, (UK/Scotland), who in addition never submitted an application form. A second time dormant status will result in expulsion from the Academy. At this point I want to address FERNANDEZ Felipe Hose from Portugal, who have paid for 2003 but not submitting an application form; I need your application form urgently.

I have been asked to distribute the Dan grading Application form. You may find it at <http://www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.karate-muellheim.de/> [www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.karate-muellheim.de](http://www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.karate-muellheim.de), from the Karate dojo Mullheim, together with other information regarding the Academy. Once more I am asking you to send me your contributions to our Newsletter, in any form, reports from various courses you have attended, inputs to the Budo themes, etc. This will make this Newsletter our Newsletter, not one man show.

Before closing I want to inform you that there will be no Newsletter in August. The next Newsletter will reach you in the first week in September 2003. Stay strong, train hard and enjoy summer holidays

Oss

Spiros G. Drossoulakis