

## SHOTOKAN RYU KASE HA INSTRUCTORS ACADEMY

SRKHIA Newsletter 4/04

Dear karateka,

It was as I had send the previous Newsletter when it came to my mind; two years have passed since the 2 March 2002, when in Glasgow Kase sensei set the foundation, at least officially, of the Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Instructors Academy. Since then a lot of water has been flown through the river, many things have been set up and function. Certainly we, as an organization, have more to do and achieve on a personal and group level. We are on a good track, and everything could be achieved, provided we have dedication and will to succeed. For the moment I want to say, even a little bit late, " Happy birthday SRKHIA".

Budo Themes: The Dojo guide; the Kamiza and its meaning

In this part I would like to talk a little for the Kamiza (lit. Deity's Seat), since, as we have seen, it comprises the spiritual center of the dojo. The Kamiza, like most things Japanese, seems to be alien to both Western society and thought. The reason to that are, potentially, some obvious spiritual difficulties to overcome, mainly due to its religious significance in Shinto religion. However similar features are certainly found in every religion.

The Kamiza or Kami Dana is found also in people's homes; is considered as a way of connecting or maintaining 'the spiritual connectedness' in every day life. Of course, something similar, although to a lesser extent, happens in Western homes as well.

It would not be unrealistic to say that almost every dojo in Japan has a kamiza. Some are quite elaborate whilst others are simple. Shinto is a simple way, thus its Jinja or shrines, although elaborate in design, are not overly ornate in content. The dojo kamiza is a reflection of its life size counterpart.

The Kamiza houses the focal point of Shinto or more accurately the Shin Kyo (sacred object), which in the majority of cases, is the mirror or Kagami. It is worthy to notice that the Kagami (mirror), the Ken (sword) and the Hoseki (jewellery) comprise, according to Japanese mythology, the three tresors of Japan. The significance of Kagami (mirror) is very important. Its first reference may be found in the Nihon Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters). The main point for us to understand is that the mirror reflects 'everything as it is'. It cuts through all thoughts and labels that have been placed upon us, by us and others, to show us as how we truly are. Equally, if not more importantly, it represents the 'pure heart and mind of that which we call God'. In essence "you may fod yourself, but you cannot fool God".

Apart from the Shin Kyo other things, connected with human life are found in the Kamiza. On a lower shelf daily offering of rice, salt & water are placed. Salt is a natural purifier and should retain its natural energy , thus the kind of typical daily table salt is not used. Rice is the largest, naturally grown, food product in Japan, carrying people through the Autumn, Winter and Spring months. Rice represents strength and forms the central part of the Kanji for Ki. In many cases, rice was given as payment for work or service. A Samurai for example, received measurements called Koku depending upon his status, at the ending of each year. Water, a natural, powerful element is used not only to preserve life, but to purify it. Many Shinto ceremonies involve purification in cold water, called Misogi. Other foods and fruits are

also offered seasonally.

The presence of greenery in the form of evergreen sprigs, called Sakaki, is common in the Kamiza. The Sakaki coming from nature reminds us that life is an on going process, always evolving, ever new. Pine is another acceptable form of green. The Sakaki is placed on the shelf, in bottles, below the main part of the altar which houses the Shin Kyo. Sakaki are sold in prepared bunches in Japan. Only the best are chosen and any dead leaves or parts are removed.

Another part of Kamiza regalia, would be in the form of weapon, especially in a budo dojo. Either a sword, a sacred gift from the Kami, or a spear, with which Izanagi O'Mikoto stirred the waters below the Floating Bridge of Heaven (the Milky Way), the droplets from which formed the islands of Japan. Or in some cases a bow and humming arrow. The bow (Floating Bridge) - the humming arrow dispelling negative energies - Yaaaaaa!!!

Additionally in the Kamiza you may see carved wooden statues or effigies of the Deity patron of the dojo or the ryu.

A further important characteristic in Shinto are the Gohei or jagged strips of white paper. The Gohei, originally made of white silk, mark or show the entrances to sacred places or objects and may be found either placed on the Sakaki or on the straw rope (Shimenawa) marking the entrance to a Jinja.

It is obvious that Kamiza has a strong relationship with Shinto and as that may become the source of many misunderstandings; therefore its absence from dojo found in Western countries is quite understandable.

However its presence in such a dojo, in a much simpler built, may remind us of the origin of our practiced art and become the link to tradition; after all "to understand the new, you must know and always remember the past".

SRKHIA Gashuku 2004:

The Academy's Gashuku for the 2004 will take place as you know on 5 & 6 June 2004, in Hasselt, Belgium. The training schedule will be, Saturday 13.00-14.30 and 15.30-17.00 and Sunday 09.45-10.45 and 11.00-12.00. The training will take place in

Sportshall KA2 Sporthumaniora, Koning Boudewijnlaan 12, 3500 Hasselt.

Concerning accommodation, you may stay at the following hotels

(reservation is every individual's responsibility): HASSOTEL:

+32/11230655 - HOLIDAY INN: +32/11242200 - HOTEL PORTMANS: +32/11263280

- IBIS: +32/11231111 - PAX: +32/11223875 - DE NIEUWE SCHOOF:

+32/11223188. All these hotels are within 5 -10 minutes walk from the

venue. There is also possibility to stay in BKSA Honbu Dojo,

Herkenrodebosstraat 40, 3511 Kuringen/Hasselt, +32/11727068,

<mailto:bksa.honbudojo@pandora.be> bksa.honbudojo@pandora.be . Cost is 5

euro/night, includes sleeping (bring your sleeping bag), shower,

hygiene. Please inform Honbu Dojo on your intention at least three days

in advance. For information concerning transport from/to the airport:

please contact the honbu dojo <mailto:bksa.honbudojo@pandora.be>

bksa.honbudojo@pandora.be

On 10 and 11th April a seminar on

Kototama Kiai and Breathing will take place in Lorient, France, Dojo de

l' ASAL, rue Charles Lesamedy. The course is organized by Bruno Garnero

5dan SRKH. The stage include among others early morning training

sessions. For inscriptions and further information contact mrs Françoise

Lucas tel 02 97 81 32 86 or 06 88 22 42 36.

<mailto:bksa.honbudojo@pandora.be> The Shotokan ryu Kase ha Spring

Course will be held on 7th, 8th & 9th May 2004 in Hasselt Belgium, under

the direction of Dirk Heene, 7 dan, assisted by Jim Martin, 6 dan,

Pascal Lecourt, 5 dan & Mario Vanroy, 5 dan. More information at BKSA Honbu Dojo, 0032 11 727068, e-mail [bksa.honbudojo@pandora.be](mailto:bksa.honbudojo@pandora.be) .  
<<mailto:bksa.honbudojo@pandora.be>> Dirk Fieret will organize seminars on Kobudo and Kobujutsu on 24/4, 29/5 and 27/6, in Terneuzen, the Netherlands. On 14-16 May at the same place a seminar on karate and Kobujutsu with Dirk Heene and Dirk and Gertjan Fieret will be held. More information Dirk Fieret 0031 115 696383 or 695072, e-mail [dfieret@zeelandnet.nl](mailto:dfieret@zeelandnet.nl) .

If you want to combine holidays with budo training, Dave Wilkins, 5th Dan SRKH, will run a course with Derek Ridgeway, 6th Dan Shito Ryu, in Tenerife - Monday 1st November to Thursday 4th November with specially reduced rates at a 4 star hotel in Playa De Las Americas. For anyone interested, email Dave Wilkins, [www.leicesterkarateclub.co.uk](http://www.leicesterkarateclub.co.uk) for more details.

And last but not least; a message from Honbu Dojo Limburg, Dirk Heene's dojo. Everybody is welcome to stay here to train for a while. You can sleep in the dojo (sleeping bag is necessary). Price per day: 7 euro including: 2x training a day; use of showers, sanitary, kitchen. Buffet-restaurant is 5 minutes away.

Again this month there is nothing to report from seminar or other activities, although many have taken place in various countries..

The closing date to renew annual memberships for 2004 was the 31 March 2004. Unfortunately a breakdown of Alan Armstrong's computer did not allow us to have here today the updated list. Alan is working to reconstruct the list, it will take some more time and I hope that very soon I will be able to provide the list with an extra letter.

Thank you for your patience, make your preparations for the Gashuku, stay strong and train hard and honestly. The next Newsletter will reach you in the first week in May  
Oss

Spiros G. Drossoulakis